

John McNaughton presents:

CARNY KILL



Illustrated by Tony Byrnes

Adapted from the novel by Robert Edmond Alter

CARNY



KILL

In 1987, I was sent a book, by an old friend, to consider as a film adaptation. The title of the book was, “Carny Kill” by Robert Edmond Alter. I was certainly intrigued, having worked as a carny for The Royal American Shows in 1975, then North America’s largest traveling carnival. I quickly read the novel, which I loved, and we entered into an option deal with a literary agent who represented the book. The author was deceased. The novel was published in 1966 and tells the story of Thax, an existential drifter, who washes up at a downmarket amusement park called Neverland, located in the Florida tidelands along the Gulf Coast.

I adapted the book into a screenplay and submitted it to my agent who sent it out into the marketplace but there was little interest at that time and the project found no backers. Eventually it was shelved and I moved on to other projects and Carny Kill would lie dormant for many years.

The first big word my father taught me was “perseverance.” When I asked what it meant he said, “it means, stick-to-it-iv-ness.” When you start something it behooves you to stick with it until you finish, “behooves” being another favorite word of his. So I did.

Fast forward to 2016 when I began to discuss the project with my former college roommate, Tony Byrnes. Tony and I went to art school together at the University of Illinois and remained friends through the years. Although our lives took different paths we stayed in touch. As I look through my emails for Carny Kill, I see that I first sent Tony the script on Jan 23, 2016.

Tony started sending sketches and various reference images soon after reading the script and we continued in this manner where he would send artwork and I would send back comments, going back and forth, month after month, refining the look, the method of rendering, developing the characters, etc. until March of 2020 when Tony sent the first actual renderings of the opening scenes.

March 2020 was the beginning of the pandemic which locked us both down in our respective homes, requiring that all work be done remotely. In many ways the pandemic worked to our advantage, allowing us the time and isolation to buckle down and crank out the scenes in a very meticulous and labor intensive manner.

As the work progressed it became clear that what we were creating was not so much a book as a work of art. As former art students this made perfect sense.

It’s been a long road from art school roommates in 1969 until the completion of Carny Kill in it’s present form and I wish to thank Elke Titus for sending me the book, Tony Byrnes for his stunning illustrations and my father for teaching me the meaning of perseverance.



John McNaughton



Thax, an existential drifter, thumbs a ride.

An old Pontiac Chieftain...



...rolls through the Florida tidelands.





The car stops.
Thax gets in.

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CARNEY KILL



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An old timer drives the car.




Thax stares into the distance.

An
amusement
park
appears like
an
apparition.





This looks like it.

A blurry, low-angle photograph taken from inside a vehicle, looking out at a carnival or fair. In the background, a large, stylized face of a person is visible, possibly a mascot or a large sculpture. The scene is filled with various structures, lights, and other people, all out of focus. A speech bubble is overlaid on the right side of the image.

That the
carnival
place? That
Dreamland?



Yeah. You can just drop
me by the gate.

They arrive at Dreamland.



The Pontiac pulls up to the gate.





Thax gets out and grabs his stuff.



Well, thanks for
the ride.

A blurry background image featuring a man and a woman smiling. The man is in the foreground, wearing glasses and a light-colored shirt. The woman is slightly behind him, also smiling. The background is out of focus, showing some colorful shapes. A speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

You remember what
I told you now.



I'll remember.

He walks
to the
gate.





CASTLE
DRACULA

ELVIS WORLD WAX

PALACE of ILLUSION

WORLD'S
STRANGEST
PEOPLE

DREAMLAND

SPOT

12
BIG
ACTS



Thax
lugs his
stuff
down
the
midway.



He passes
a flashy
thrill ride.
Riders
scream,
suspended
upside
down in
mid air.



Loose change drops from
their pockets and rains on
the midway.

A ride
jockey
scoops up
the loot.



A man in a dark suit and tie is walking past a large, vibrant red flower arrangement. The scene is slightly blurred, suggesting movement. The man is looking towards the camera, and his expression is serious. The background is dark and indistinct.

Thax eyeballs
the Ride Jockey,
wise to his
game.

Hurry!
Hurry!

Then he
hears a
voice from
his past.



Step right up!

He turns toward
the adenoidal
voice of Bill Duff.

Bill Duff
introduces
the
voluptuous
Billie Peeler
to a crowd
of marks
gathered
around his
bally
platform.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a tiara and a sequined dress, is performing a dance on a stage. She is looking down and to the side. The background is a colorful, ornate stage set with a sign that says "PALA".

Perform a
sophisticated Eastern
courtship dance...



...seldom
seen outside the Casbah
of old Baghdad.

12
BIG
ACTS



The forgotten
mating dance of the Hindu
Love Goddess dating back
to primitive times.



Smuggled out
of old Lahore...

CASTLE
DRACULA

PALACE OF ILLUSIONS

WORLD'S
STRANGEST
PEOPLE

12
BIG
ACTS

WORLDWIDE



...under threat of death from
the killer priests of Kali.



Duff
spots
Thax.

Thax flips Duff the bird.





Son-of-a-bitch!

POW

A sailor fires a rifle at a row of steel rabbits. He curses as he misses.



The sailor's girlfriend laughs at him behind his back, then someone catches her eye.



It's Thax.
He smiles
at the
sailor's
girl and
steps up
to the
counter.

Step aside folks. Let
the man see the rabbit.



Gabby, the grizzled shooting
gallery guy, gives Thax a rifle.



Thax winks at the sailor's girl and checks the barrel of his gun. Satisfied, he takes careful aim.





Flopsy...

Mopsy...

...and there
goes Cottontail!

Ding!

Ding!

Ding!

Thax
runs out
of ammo
and
hands
the rifle
back to
Gabby.



Where do I
find the man?



Something
wrong?





Yeah, and sleight of
hand, the usual.

Gabby spots Billie Peeler on the midway.

Billie! C'mere, huh?



She stops.



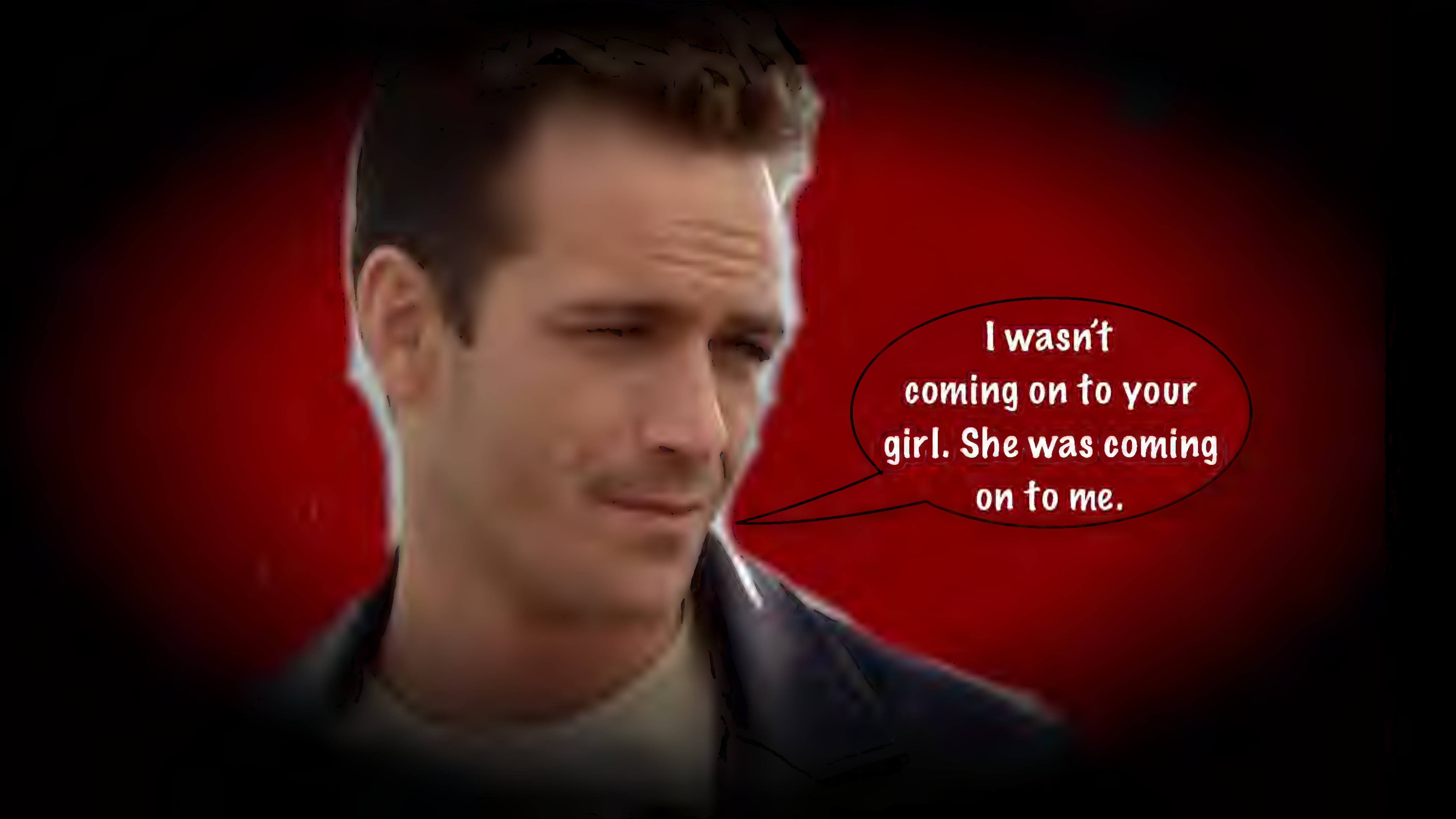


You wink at
my girl, buddy?

No!



Yeah? But I seen
ya. I don't like you coming
to my girl.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a man with short, dark, wavy hair and a light beard. He is looking down and to his right with a faint, somewhat sheepish or apologetic expression. He is wearing a dark-colored jacket over a grey t-shirt. The background is a solid, vibrant red. A white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to the right of his face, containing text in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**I wasn't
coming on to your
girl. She was coming
on to me.**



Listen, buddy.

I'm not your buddy.

Billie's eyes rack focus onto the sailor, who's about to jump Thax.



Gabby smacks the
counter with his
blackjack.

Gawaan!
Beat it!

Your mother's
a whore.

The sailor slinks off.



He wants to see Rob
for a job. Take him, huh?




Sure. Follow me.

Thax and
Billie
stroll
down the
midway.

Billie. That's
a perfect name for a
prostitute.

What's that crack
supposed to mean?



A scene from the movie 'Billie Jean' featuring a man and a woman in a Las Vegas setting. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark suit and a white shirt. The woman, on the right, is wearing a red dress and a tiara. They are standing in front of a large, brightly lit sign that reads '11 MOON VAL'. The man is speaking to the woman, and his words are displayed in a red speech bubble.

That's just the way
your name struck me. If I
were writing a book and
wanted a whore in it, I'd
call her "Billie."

Too obvious. I'd
fool everyone and
call her an old
fashioned name
like Elizabeth.



That's called
misdirection.
That's what I do.

Really?

A man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt under a dark jacket, is looking towards a woman on the right. The woman has blonde hair, is wearing a tiara and a red dress. They are in a room with colorful, out-of-focus lights in the background. There are three speech bubbles overlaid on the image.

Yeah... but
I can't be more
specific...

Alive! Alive! On
the inside!

... 'cuz we
magicians have
an unwritten law
about that.

She
scrabbles.

She
climbs.

She spins
a web.

Thax spots Bill Duff, shoots him a dark look.






PALACE of

MAIN ENTRANCE

SPIDER

Something
wrong?



Uh-uh. So,
are you really
the Queen of the
Casbah?

Uh-huh.
I'm the queen of the
Kootch girls too. I do a
specialty dance.



I bet you're good.

I am.

A man in a black suit and a woman in a red dress are walking through a crowded party. The man is on the left, looking towards the woman on the right. The woman is looking up and to the right. In the background, there are other people, including a woman in a grey dress and a man in a dark shirt, and a large, colorful, abstract sculpture. The scene is lit with warm, yellow and orange lights.

I'll come
and see you in action
sometime.

Not if Rob gives
you a job, you won't. You'll
find Rob upstairs.

Billie walks him around to a back door.



A man in a dark suit and white shirt stands on the left, looking towards a woman in a red dress and tiara in the center. The woman is smiling. In the background, there are blurred figures of other people and warm, golden light. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a red one from the man and a pink one from the woman.

Where will
I find you?

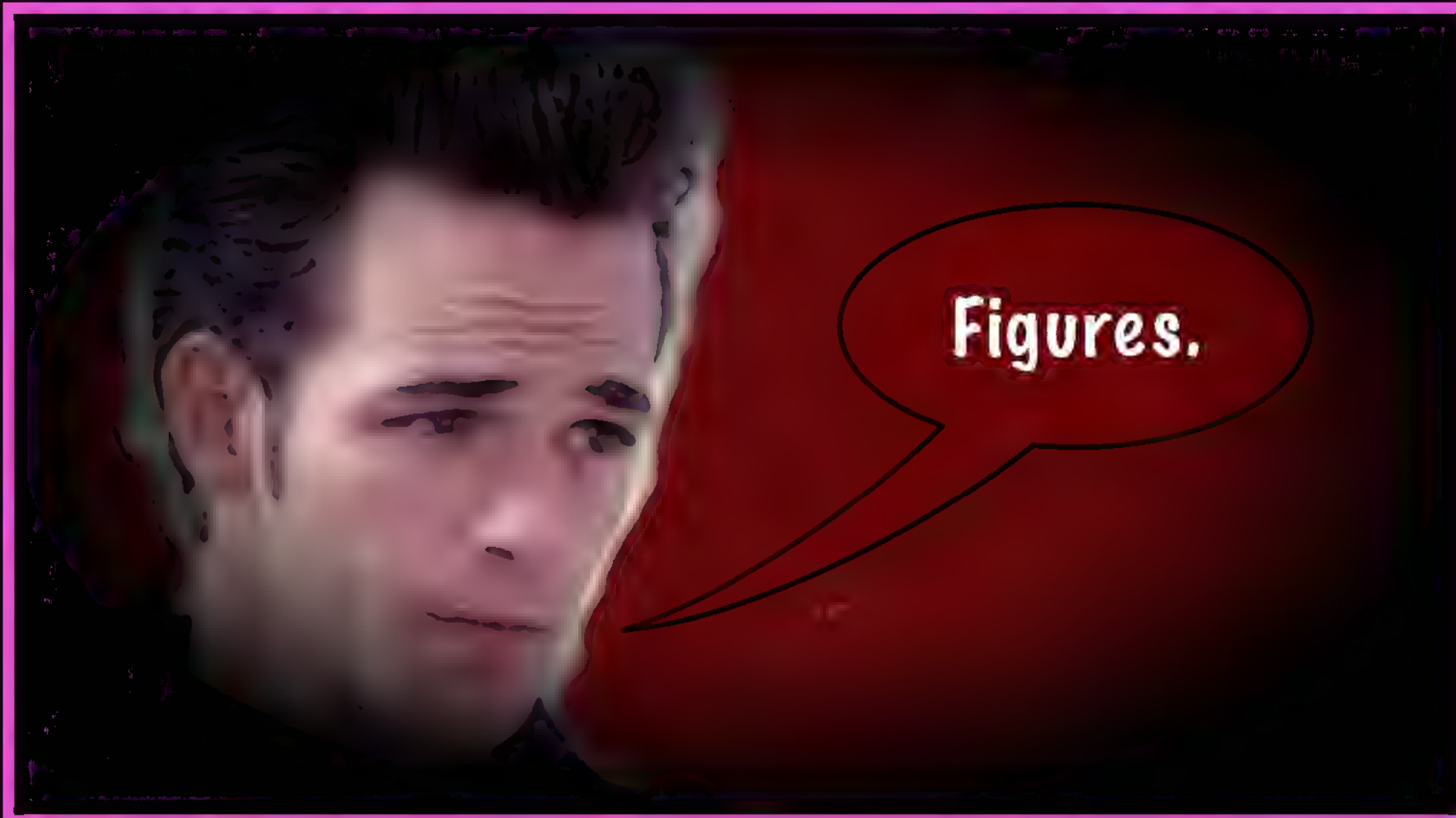
I'll know
where to find you if you
get the job.




You didn't mention your name.

Thax.

Just Thax?



A man with dark hair and a woman with blonde hair are shown in a close embrace. A small dog is visible between them. The man is looking down, and the woman is looking up at him. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.


It doesn't
really matter,
does it?

That's
entirely up to you.


Thax enters Rob Cochrane's office.

C'mon in and grab
a seat. That one...

...Carry
man, huh?

A man with dark hair, wearing a white tank top and a black jacket, stands in a room. He is looking slightly to his right. In the background, there is a scale and a calendar on the wall. A speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing the text: "The word really gets around, or did you guess?".

The word
really gets around,
or did you guess?

A man with short, light-colored hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a plaid shirt. He is holding a glass of beer with a straw. A pink speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to his left, containing text. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

Gabby gave me a
buzz, I like to keep
in touch.



Gabby?
Oh, the shooting
gallery op.

A man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit and tie, is holding a clear glass bottle of alcohol. He is in a dimly lit bar or restaurant with shelves of bottles in the background. Three speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a pink one at the top left, a red one in the middle left, and a large pink one on the right.


You a
drunk?

No.

I'll take
your word on
that. Spielers I
don't need,
dime a dozen.



So are
strippers, but who
ever turns a pro
down?




You're
that good, huh?
Who you worked
for?

A man with dark, curly hair and a serious expression is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a white polo shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A red speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to the right of the man's head, containing text. The word 'OFFICE' is faintly visible on the wall behind him.

OFFICE

Royal American,
Murphy Brothers, my
wife used to have an act. I
spieled for her.

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is pointing his right index finger towards a pink speech bubble. He has a serious expression. The background is a blurred office interior with a desk and a window.

What's
your name?

A man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, stands with his arms crossed. He is looking slightly to his right.


L.M. Thaxton.
Thax is good enough.

A man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark sweater, is looking down at something in his hands. He has a serious expression.

L.M.?

A man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is looking slightly to his right.

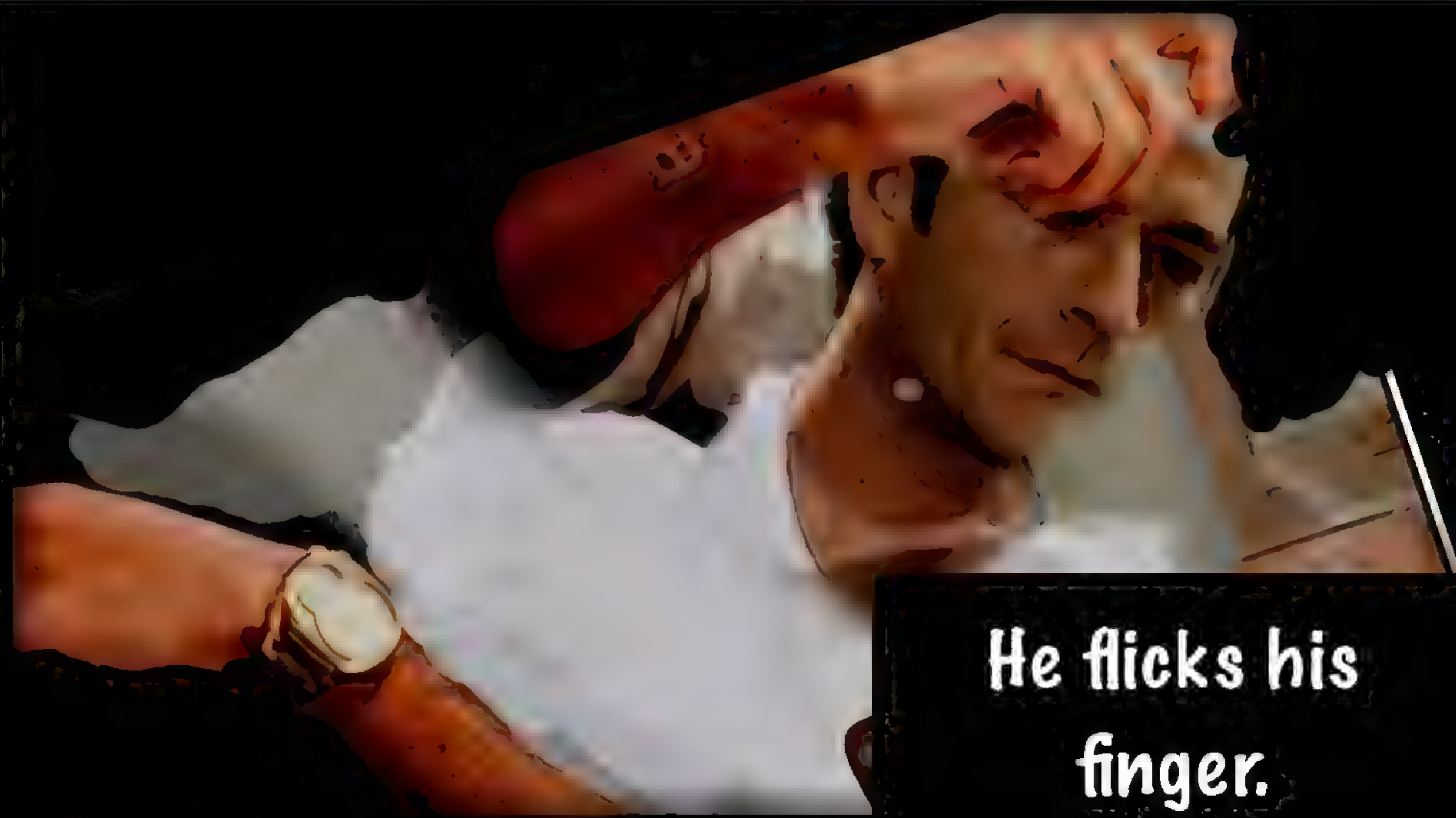
Leslie Mendelsohn.

A man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. A pink speech bubble with a black outline is positioned in front of his chest. The background is dark and out of focus.

Okay. This
sleight of hand stuff,
you any good?



Thax hunches
forward.




He flicks his
finger.



Cochrane's eye
trembles.




He palms the
coin.

A man with white hair, wearing a dark blue shirt, is looking down at a smartphone held in his left hand. He is holding a piece of food, possibly a sandwich or a burger, in his right hand. A speech bubble is overlaid on the image, pointing towards the man. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a bar or a restaurant setting with warm lighting. A bottle of beer is visible on the left side of the frame.

It's in your
pocket, huh?




Nope.



**You got skills all
right. You any good at
the shell game?**

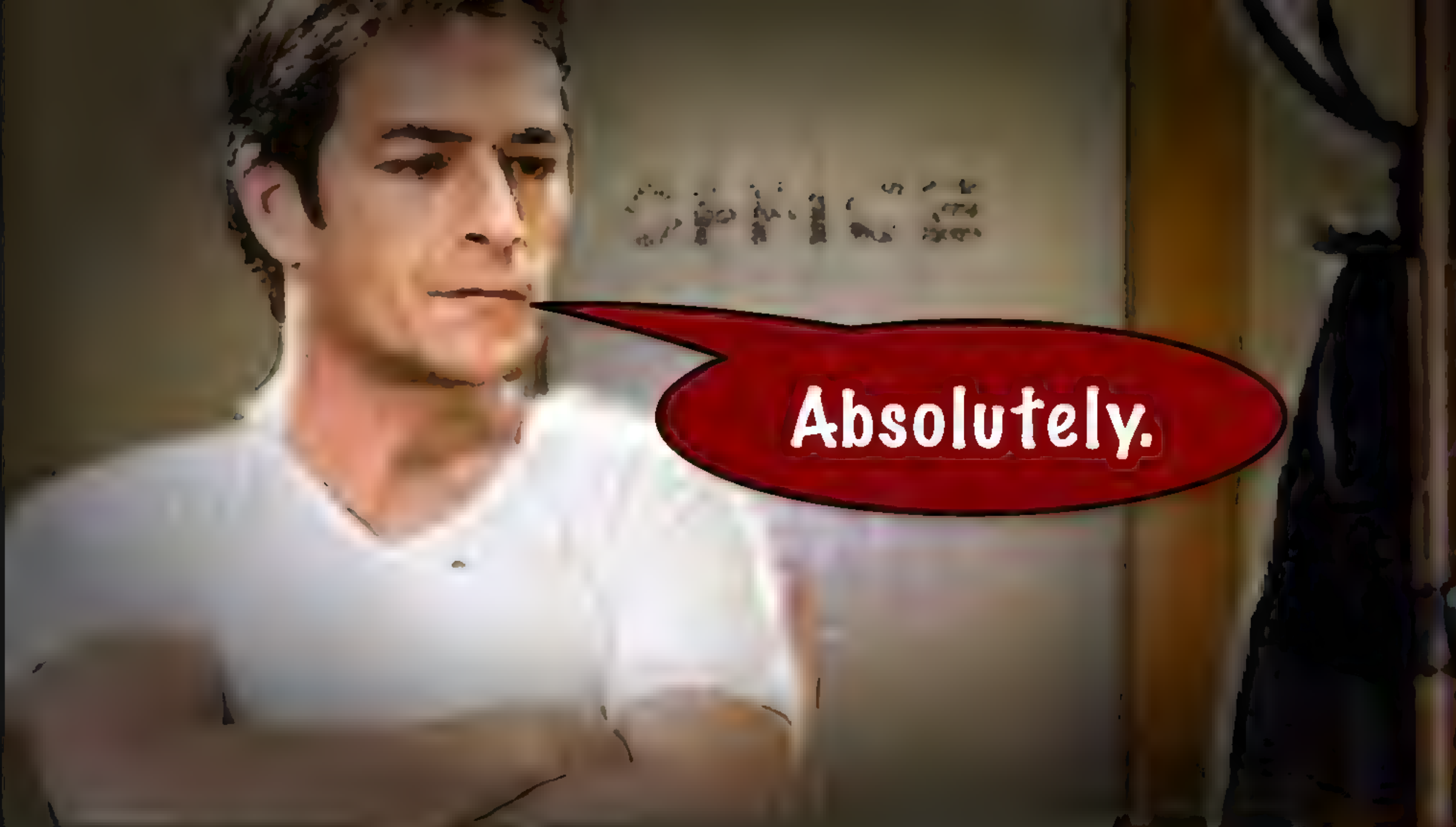


Not bad.



Okay, we'll set
you up with a joint, to add
to the atmosphere.

This ain't the
old carny you and I
knew, Thax. We don't pick up
the marks by the heels and
shake them 'til they're
dry anymore.



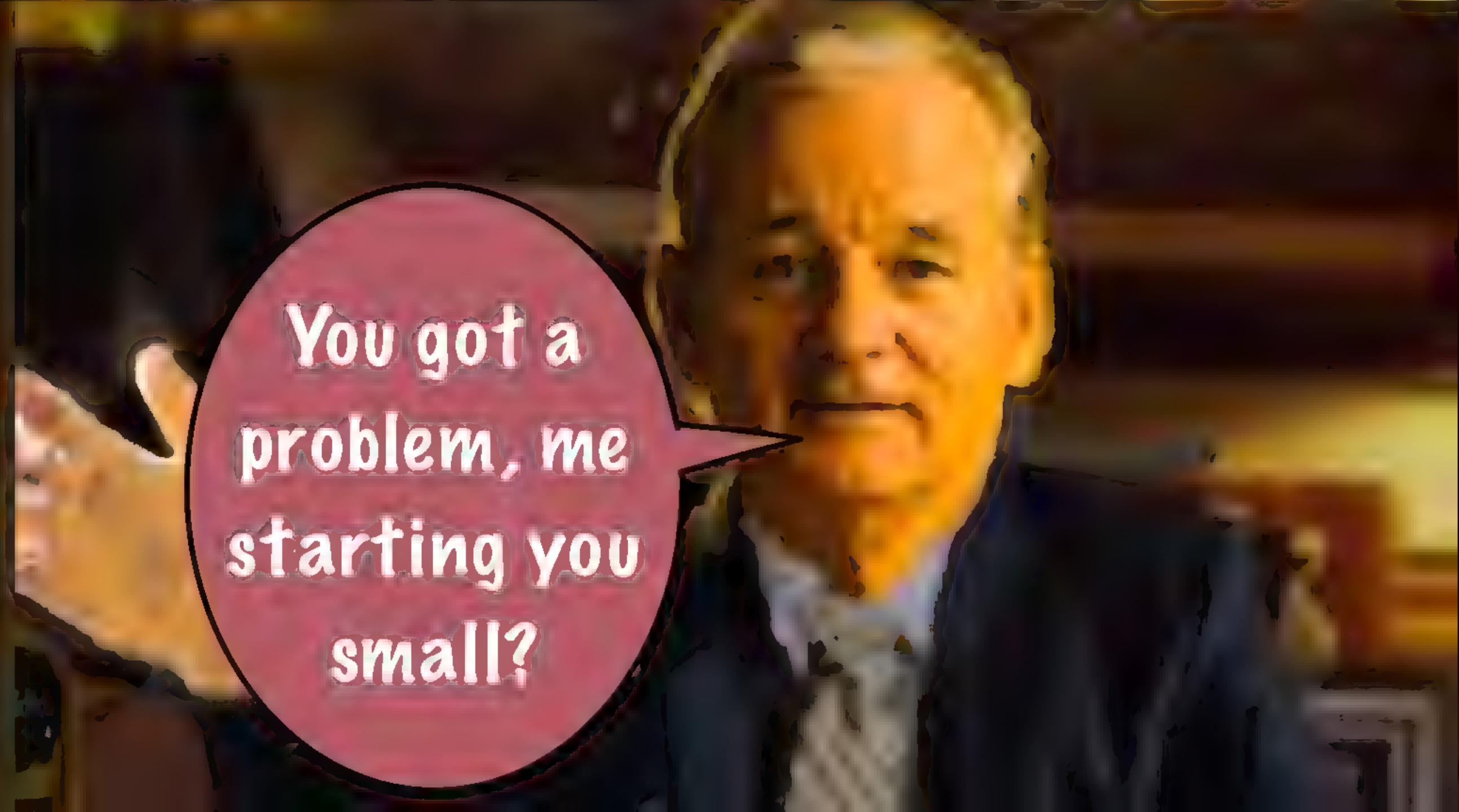
Absolutely.



Times have
changed.



They
sure have.




You got a
problem, me
starting you
small?



OFFICE

Right now
I am small.




Good. We
got a lot of old time
carnies working this lot,
and I do my best to keep
them from skinning
the marks.

Dreamland
is a destination
resort. We're
small but growing
and we gotta stay
clean to grow.
Understand?




OFFICE

Absolutely

A man with light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit and a light blue shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. His right hand is raised, with fingers spread, as if gesturing while speaking. Two pink speech bubbles with black outlines are overlaid on the image. The first bubble is in the upper left, and the second is below it and to the right. The background is dark and out of focus.

You get around a bit you'll
notice we also got high-school and
college kids working here.

Kids that are
young and fun and dumb.
Keeps the atmosphere
wholesome.



I don't want
that old time squalid
shit showing through
the paint.

A Dreamland
mark is a happy mark.
Coming in and driving
home. OK?



OFFICE

No
problem.



like it's your life

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30

Cochrane gives Thax an
employee ID card.

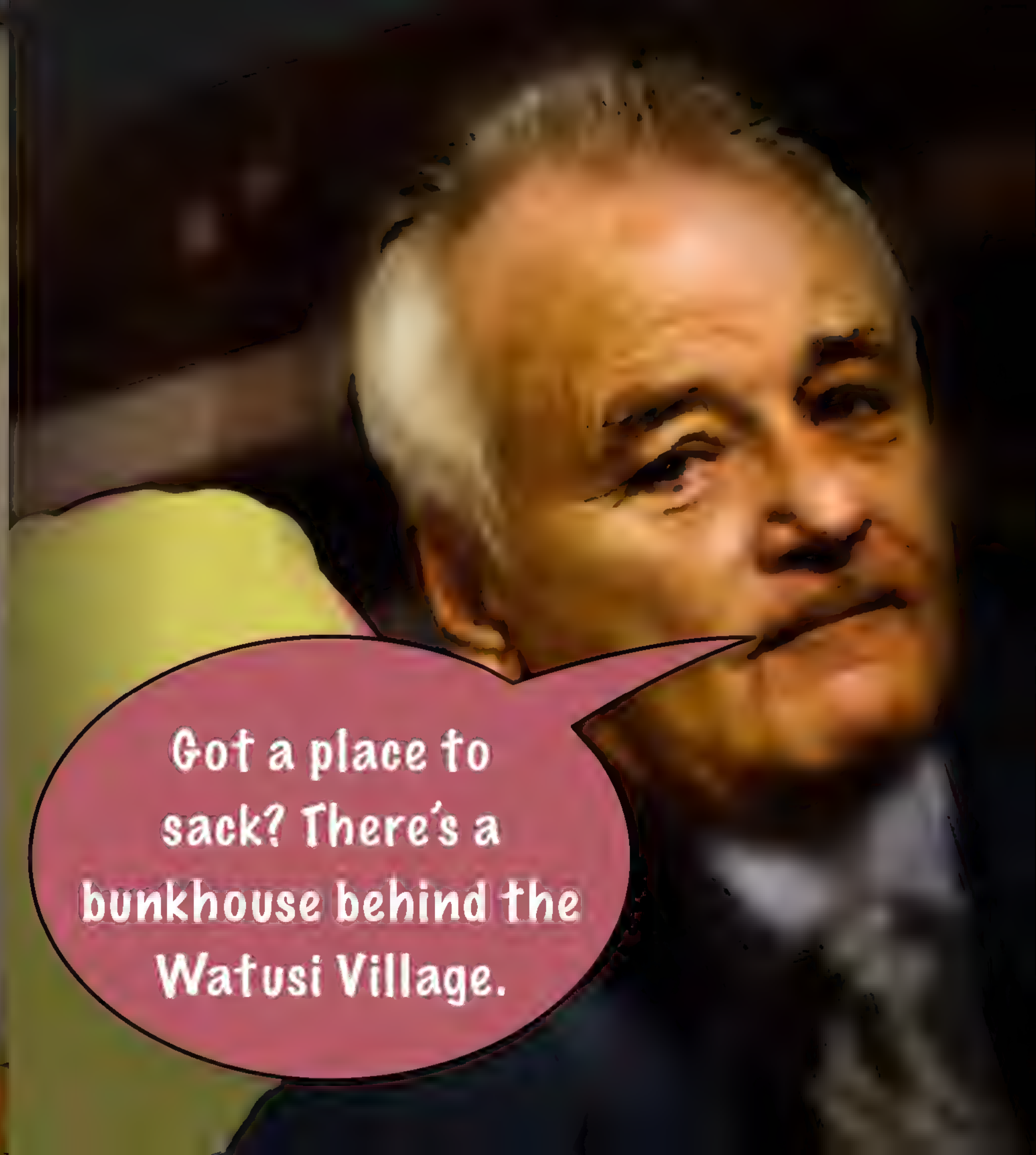
Sign that. You'll need it if you
want to stay on the lot tonight.

How are you fixed?





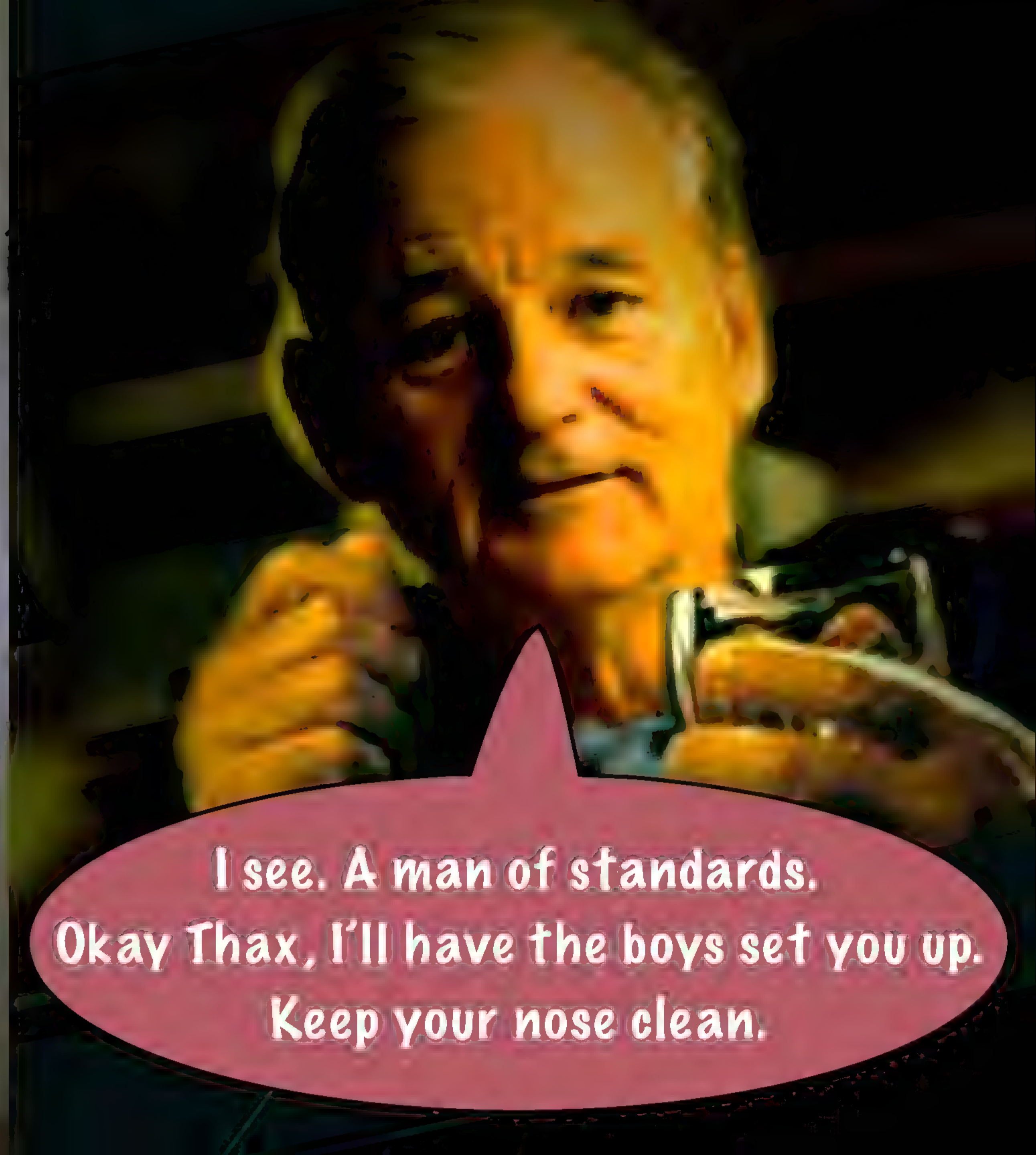
All right, I got a
few bucks.



Got a place to
sack? There's a
bunkhouse behind the
Watusi Village.



No Thanks.



I see. A man of standards.
Okay Thax, I'll have the boys set you up.
Keep your nose clean.



OFFICE

Like a
whistle.



Thax leaves Cochrane's office and heads back to the midway.

He spots
Jerry, who's
addressing a
group of
marks.

The management
has requested me to warn
you there's been a report of a
pickpocket here this evening.







Jerry watches the marks all pat the pockets where their valuables are located.



Eddie, his partner, moves
stealthily through the crowd...



...picking
their
pockets.



If you see anyone behaving
suspiciously, please inform a
uniformed guard.



Thax passes Jerry,
wise to his game,
then grins and holds
up his wallet for
Jerry to see.

The
management will pay
a healthy reward for his,
or her, apprehension.
Thank you.

Thax moves on to
the kootch show.
He flashes his
Dreamland ID.





The ticket taker gives him a dirty look. He ignores her and enters.

Thax finds his way to an empty seat in the back.



On stage, a line of
kootch girls dance.



Three musicians in Malay pirate costumes sit
crossed legged on the floor.



As Thax's eyes adjust to the
darkness, the kootch girls
shuffle offstage.



The lights
go out.
SILENCE,
then, the
reedy
SOUND of a
snake
charmer's
flute.



Billie enters.
A pink spotlight
travels slowly up her
body, illuminating the
sensual contours of
her body.



Then, a DRUMBEAT.

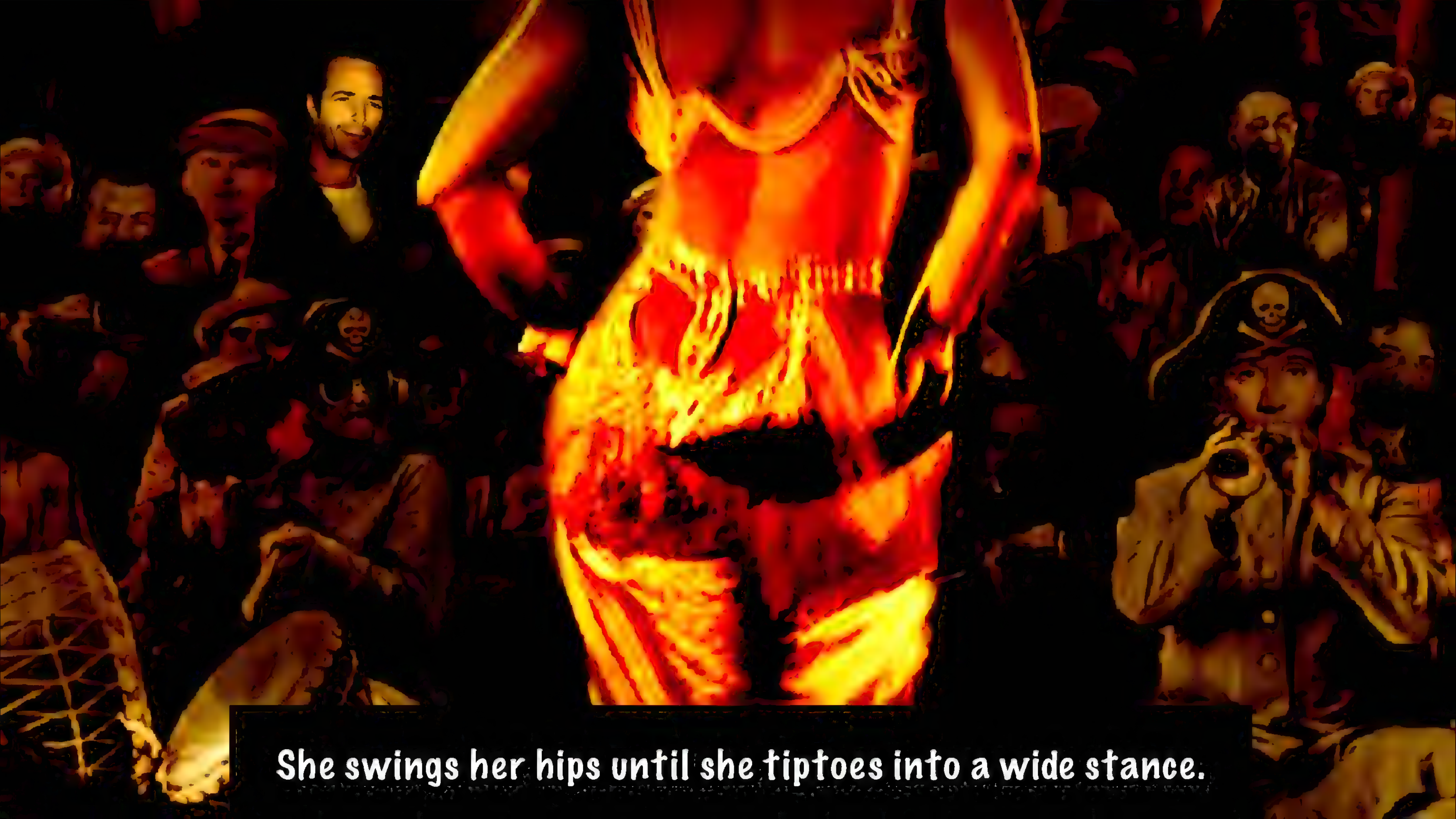




She spots someone in the crowd.

It's Thax.



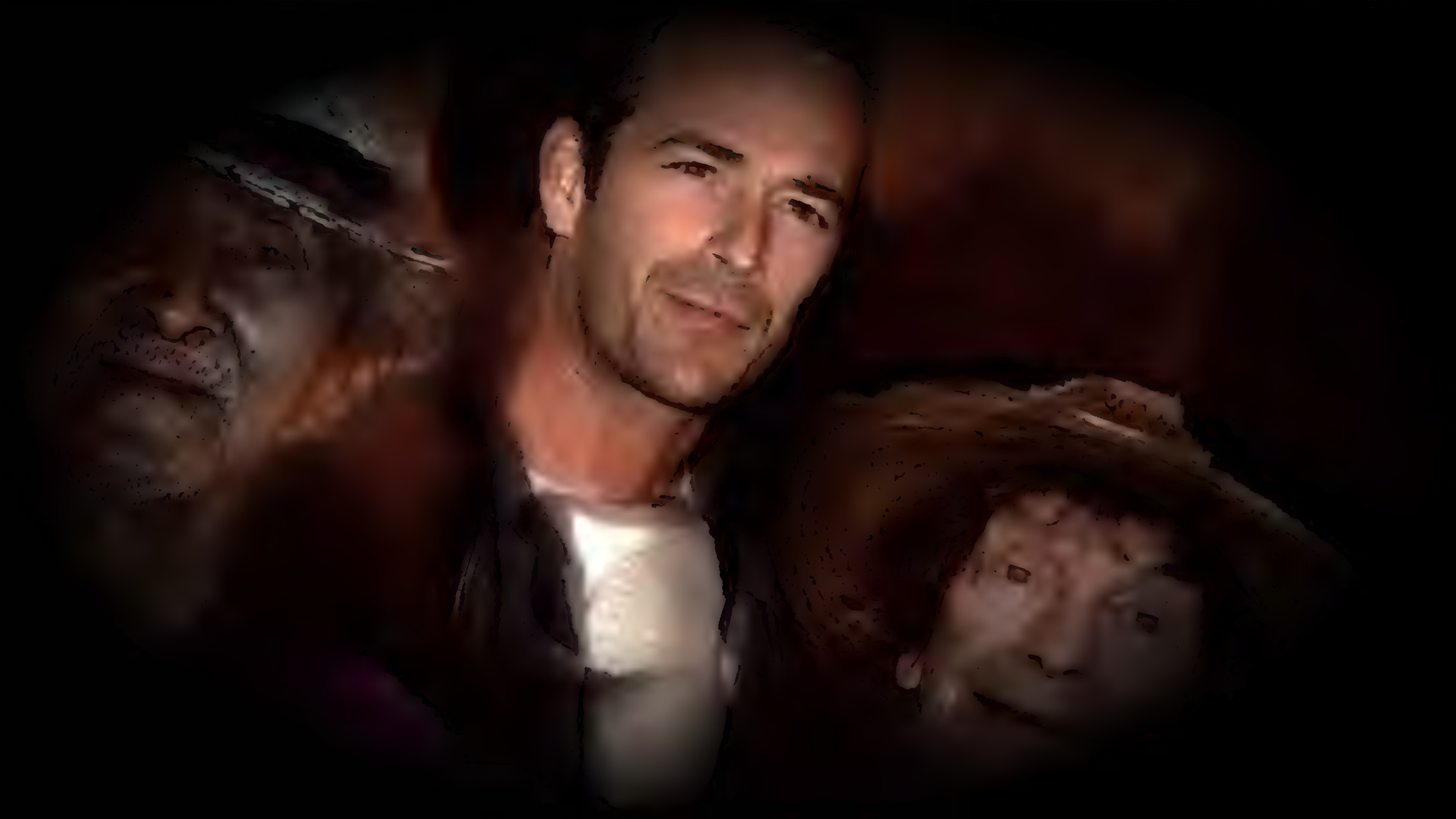


She swings her hips until she tiptoes into a wide stance.

Then does
an old
school
stripper's
hip sling.







Her hands fondle suggestive
and invisible objects.












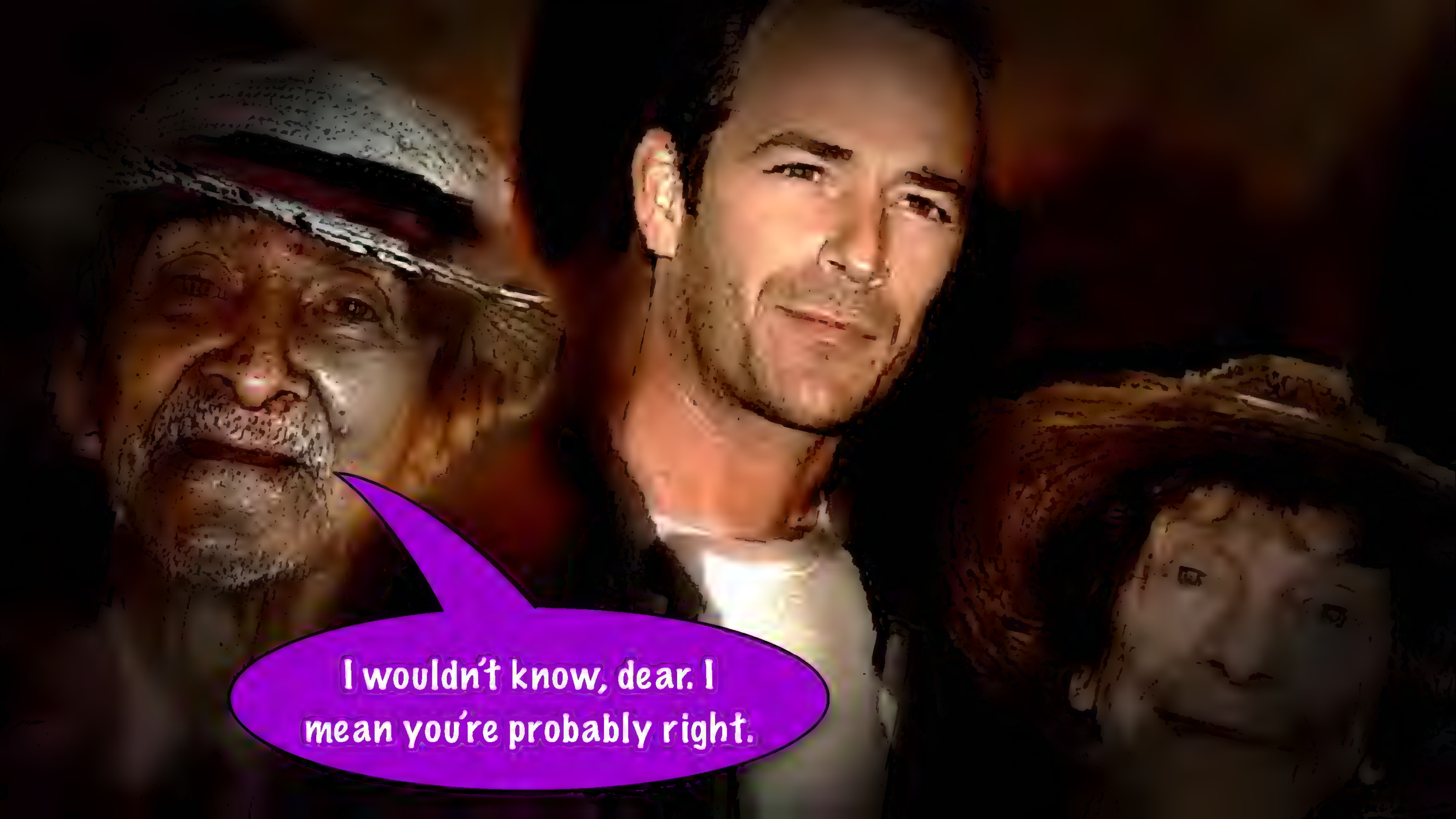
Then...

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a red dress, is shown in a dark room. She is illuminated by a spotlight, creating a strong contrast with the surrounding darkness. She appears to be in a dramatic pose, possibly on a stage or in a film set. The lighting is focused on her, highlighting her features and the texture of her dress. The background is mostly black, with some faint, out-of-focus lights visible in the lower left corner.

The lights go out.

A man with short dark hair and a light beard is in the foreground, looking slightly to the right. Behind him, a woman with blonde hair is visible, looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus. A large, semi-transparent speech bubble with a black border is positioned in the upper right, containing white text with a black outline.

That was not an authentic
Berber courtship dance. That is a sex
dance, just a sex dance like you see in a
strip joint. Those were definitely not
authentic North African
instruments.




I wouldn't know, dear. I
mean you're probably right.

As Thax exits the tent, the flute player, Dickie, tags him.


Mr. Thaxton?
Miss Peeler wants
to see you.



A man with dark hair, wearing a yellow shirt, is looking down and slightly to his right. He has a speech bubble above him. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting and other people.

Me? Why?

I wouldn't
know but be sure
to look me up and tell
me when you find
out.

A close-up of a woman's face, smiling and looking towards the camera, positioned in the bottom right corner of the frame.

Billie steps
out of her
dressing
room.

Did Rob Cochrane
give you a job?

Yeah. A shell game
on the midway.


Then why did you come in here?
You should know better. It's all right for a
bunch of dumb marks to gawk at my body, but
not for you.





What are you
so upset about?

I don't want to
think of you as one of them.
They're suckers.



All right, I apologize
Billie. I'm sorry, really. I didn't
know you were serious.

I mean about me
seeing you dance. If I did, I
wouldn't have come in.

Okay, don't
beat it to death. I've got
to get ready for the next
show. I'm glad you got
the job, Thax.

Queen
MILLIE REEDER
CASB, 11/11

DRESSING ROOM

And she's gone.



On his way into Queen Anne's Cottage for dinner, Thax gets bumped by a fat guy on his way out.

Watch it big boy.

How'd you like a
smashed face?

Eddie passes behind
Thax.

Thax's wallet is gone.

Damn.

Mr.
Thaxton, sir?



Jimmy
Bentley, a
Dreamland
guide,
approaches
Thax.

Yeah?

Mrs.
Cochrane wants
to see you.

Mrs. Cochrane?

The
owner's
wife.



Did she say why?

I'm sure I don't
know why, sir. She just told me
to get you.

A man in a dark jacket and light shirt is looking at a woman in a red jacket. The woman is pointing her finger towards a building in the background. The building has a steep, dark roof with several gables and a sign that says "DINER" in purple letters. A red speech bubble is above the man, and a green speech bubble is next to the woman.

Okay, so where do I find her?

Up there. She's got a
suite above the restaurant.

Thax climbs the
stairway. Jimmy
tags along.

The owner's
wife, she wants to see
you too?

Yes sir.



Thax enters the dark room and walks into a blinding light.



A GLEAMING BLUR whizzes straight at his head.





Thax dives to the carpet as a knife sticks in wood.

THWACK!

The spotlight goes out. The room lights click on.

Your aim
is off, May.





Not really. I'm
a little drunk.

Thax scans May's richly appointed suite.

Nice score, May.
Very tasteful.

I live good, Thax.
You know that.






Champagne?
Want some?

No
thanks.

You tell Cochrane
about you and me?

Sure, when I first came to him.

Thax hangs his coat on May's knife.

A man in a tuxedo is shown in profile, smoking a cigar. He is holding a glass of champagne. The background is a blurred city skyline at night. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image.

I have nothing
to hide. Anyhow, he
knew my name. The
word gets around.

It sure does.

Jimmy
enters the
room.

You haven't
changed a bit, May. I'm
surprised.






No you're not.



I busted Jimmy down ten minutes ago, I whipped him till he cried. He can take a lot of abuse... for a boy.



A close-up, profile view of a woman's face, looking towards the right. She has dark hair and is wearing a dark top. A bright, glowing light emanates from her mouth, forming a speech bubble. The background is dark and out of focus, with some greenish-blue light visible. The speech bubble is yellow and contains text.


Then I sent him out
to look for you. I told him you
used to be my husband.



You trying
to accomplish
something
here, May?

I put Jimmy in a
dress sometimes. His face
gets awfully red.







Kid, you can go.

Oh go on,
get out.

Jimmy exits.

A close-up of a man with short, dark hair, wearing a dark suit and a light-colored shirt. He is looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. The background is a dimly lit restaurant with red curtains and a chandelier. A red speech bubble with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**What's your
new husband think
about all this?**

A woman with blonde hair is shown in profile, smoking a cigarette. She is holding a green and white patterned box. The background is a blurred city skyline at night. A purple speech bubble is positioned over the cigarette.

If Rob knows,
he doesn't say. He
doesn't come here. I go
to his place.

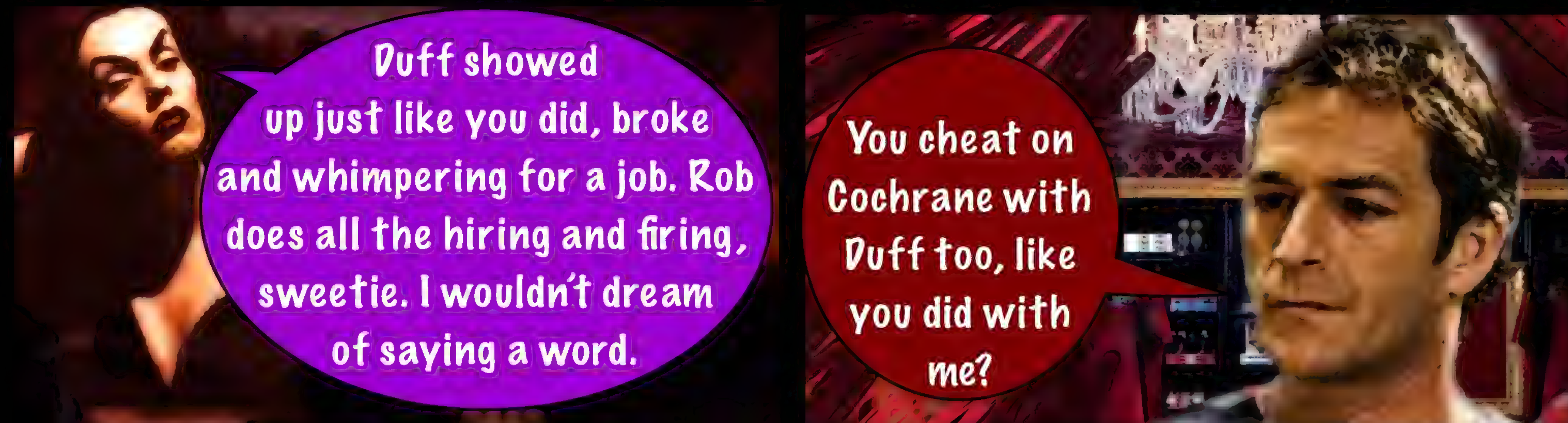


You have
anything to do with
him hiring me?

I didn't
even know you were on
the lot, darling, till Bill
Duff told me.



Cozy for
you and Duff, huh,
this set up?



Duff showed
up just like you did, broke
and whimpering for a job. Rob
does all the hiring and firing,
sweetie. I wouldn't dream
of saying a word.

You cheat on
Cochrane with
Duff too, like
you did with
me?



I don't
hate Rob.

But you
hate me.

Used to. Now
I'm curious.


She unzips his pants and reaches inside.

This might be enough for
a kootch show slut. Haha!



You
gonna run
me off
May?

Why? We travel in
different circles now so I don't think
there'll be much occasion for awkward
encounters. Let's just get on with our
very different lives.



You can go now, Thax. See
if you can keep your pants zipped
for a whole week in a row.

A man with dark, wavy hair and a slight smile is standing in a doorway. He is wearing a white t-shirt under a dark, possibly black, jacket. He is looking out of the doorway towards a city skyline at night. The city lights are visible in the background, and a large, illuminated structure, possibly a bridge or a building, is prominent in the distance. The doorway is made of wood, and a metal latch is visible on the right side. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing the text "See you, May.".

See you, May.

May eyes him strangely.

Yesss.





Jerry the
pickpocket
hovers around
Queen Anne's
Cottage,
eyeballing the
marks.

Thax walks up
and confronts
him.



You and I
need to talk, out
back by the
garbage cans.

Shit man, I didn't even know
you were with the show. Shoulda' guessed
though. Anyway, how could I turn down
that flashy challenge of yours?

Jerry hands Thax's wallet back to him.



Thanks.



Was it the fat
guy on the steps?

Nah, that was
just another mark, but
Eddie was in there, sneakin'
around. He nailed the fat guy
too. I woulda' liked a crack
myself but, you know, I had to
put Eddie on you once you
challenged me.

Eddie must be good.



Thax hands Jerry a wallet.

This yours?

Christ!

Then, Thax hands back Jerry's wristwatch.





Queen Anne's
Cottage

This yours also?


A pro of the first
order!



Look,
Thaxton, you don't
want to push around those
little walnut shells with
a talent like that.



Rob Cochrane
talks tough, but
he lets us old timers
keep our hands in,
within reason, of
course.



My name, racket and
everything. You know it all.

Sure,
word gets
around.
But look...

Uh-uh.
Not in my line. But
thanks anyway.

Thax
walks
away.

Thax enters
Tarzan's
Treehouse
with a group
of marks.
An attractive
college girl in
a leopard skin
costume
conducts the
tour.





Tarzan sleeps here.

Thax looks
with
approval at
Tarzan's
bed.

The
Leopard
Girl points
out
another,
smaller
bed
against
the wall.

And here is
Cheetah's bed.

Look
honey, isn't
that cute?

Is that a
real monkey?





Thax steps out onto the treehouse porch for some fresh air and sees...



A young man
atop a tower
who takes
hold of a
giant Viking
horn.

He blows the horn.



HO-HO-HO-HO



It's closing time.




The marks
exit
Tarzan's
Treehouse.
Thax
hangs
around
until the
crowd
peters
out,
then...

Jimmy, the guide, approaches.

All closed
up for the night sir.
Oh, it's you.

Look kid...
Jimmy, May and
me were married once
is all. I got nothing
against you.

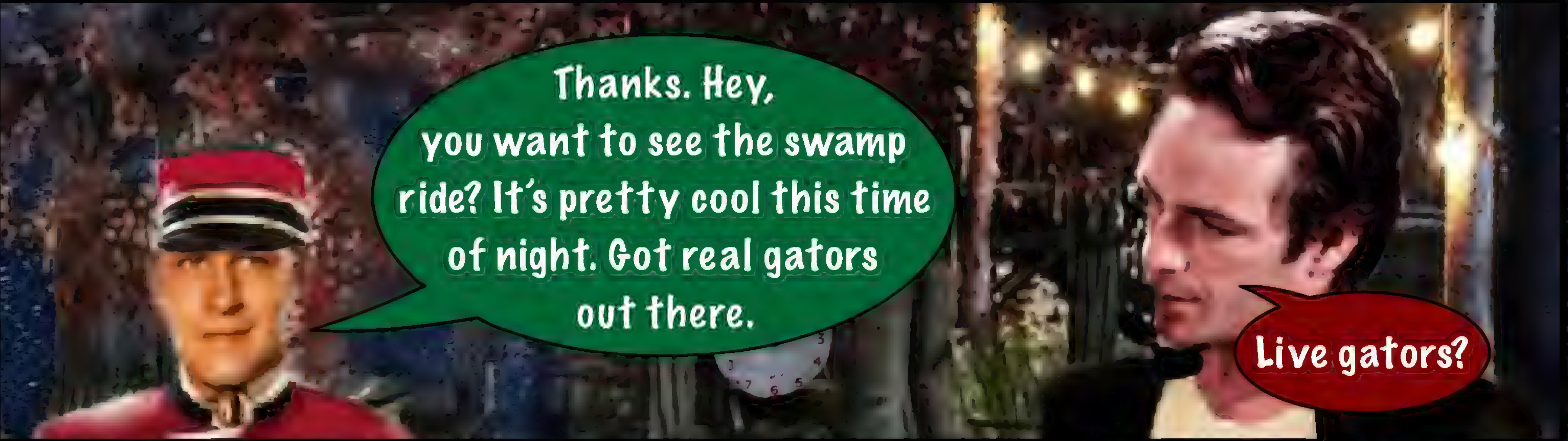
Sorry WE'RE
CLOSED



She can be awful mean. At least to me; she can be awful mean to me.

Listen, you do what you gotta do. Don't worry about me. I'm not a talker.

Sorry we are
CLOSED




Thanks. Hey,
you want to see the swamp
ride? It's pretty cool this time
of night. Got real gators
out there.

Live gators?



They're harmless,
they come from the gator
farm, and, ah, shoot. I
forgot. I can't.

Got a date?

A man wearing a red jacket and a red cap with a black band is looking towards the right. A green speech bubble with white text is positioned above his head.

Uh, yeah.
I gotta go.

A round clock with a white face and black numbers is mounted on a dark wooden post. Above the clock is a small rectangular sign with the words 'NEXT SHOW' in red capital letters.

NEXT SHOW

A rectangular sign with a dark background and a thin white border. The text 'Sorry WE'RE' is in a white script font, and 'CLOSED' is in large, bold, white capital letters.

Sorry WE'RE
CLOSED

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt, is looking towards the left.

And Jimmy leaves.



When the coast is clear, Thax goes back inside...



...and makes his way up to Tarzan's bed.

He lies down and quickly falls into a dream.







Thax awakens, disturbed by his dream and
sees another image, strangest of all.



**A Monkey Man
enters through
the window
and slips into
the shadows.
Thax drifts
back to sleep.**







Thax is
awakened by
the
BELLOWING
of an
alligator.

He looks at his watch.





Thax goes out on the porch.



A little swamp boat putts through the waterway below.


He's dead. Oh my
god it's awful! They'll
eat him alive!



Jimmy
pulls up
to the
dock.
Thax
jumps on
the boat.

Who's
dead? Who?

Dead meat,
that's what they feed 'em.
They'll think he's their food,
they'll eat him.



Okay. Okay.
Show me. Show me
where, Jimmy.

It's like seeing
blood. Sometimes, even big guys, they
just see their blood and it's got nothing to
do with how tough you are.



Just point out where
it is, okay, Jimmy?

Down there.
You can't miss it, he's like
floating, right out in the open,
in the water.



Yeah, all right,
kid. Get out.

I'm
sorry, really sorry.
I just can't, I can't
absolutely go back
there.

**Jimmy scrambles
off the boat.**

Thax guns
the
throttle
and the
boat putts
away.



He pulls the boat alongside a body.



Some bewildered gators eye the body from the shallows.





Thax sees Rob Cochrane. DEAD. A throwing knife stuck in his heart.

He hooks
the body
and floats it
back to
shore.



Whatta you
know about this?

It's Rob
Cochrane. He's dead. I
pulled him in.

That's all
I know.

Thax
jumps
off the
boat as
the
security
guards
spot the
body.






You know
who killed him?

No. Do you?

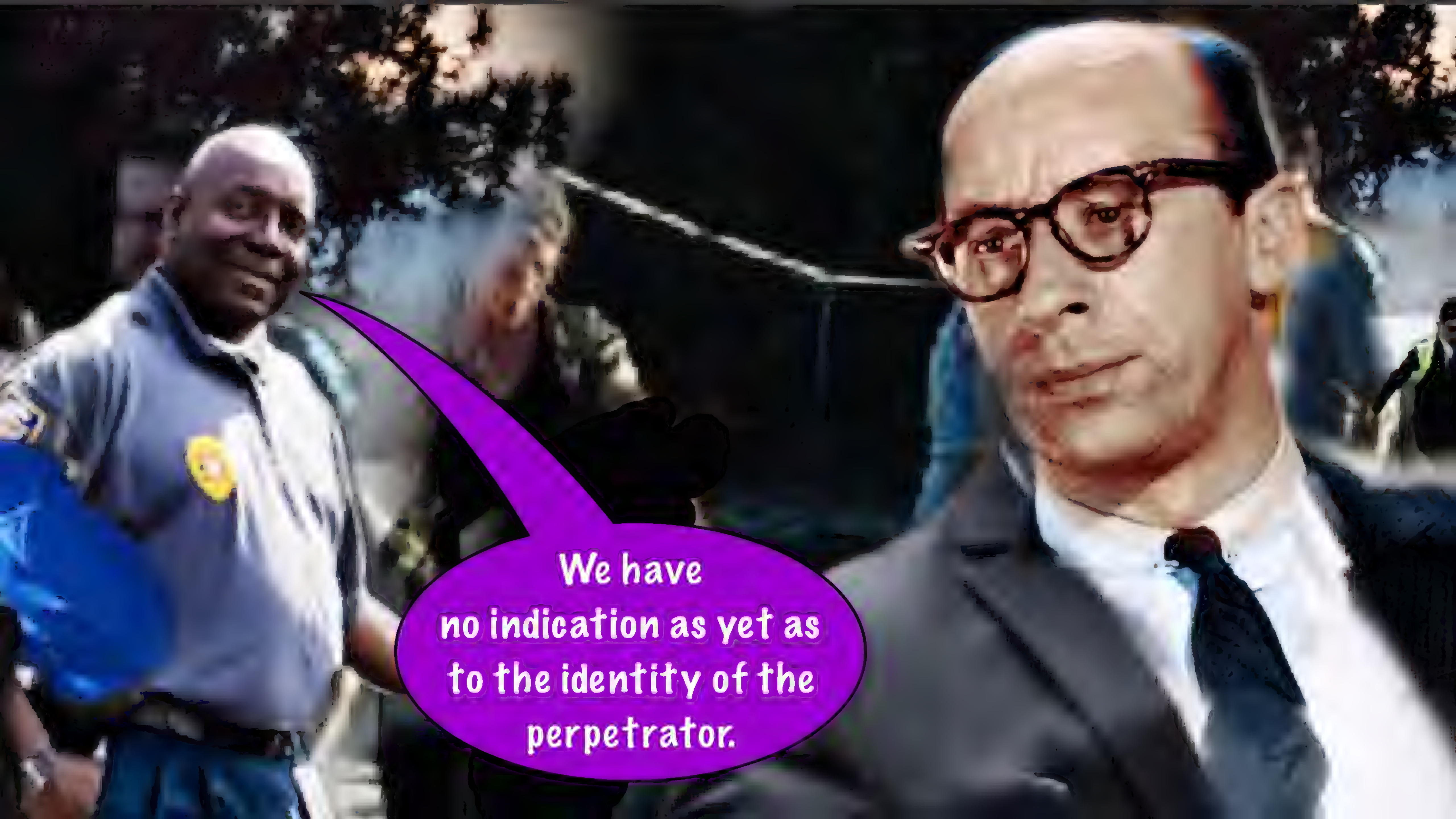


Who is it Simpson?
Who's been hurt?

Lloyd Franks, the show's
manager arrives on the dock.



The deceased is
Rob Cochrane. He was found by one of the
guides at approximately oh-seven hundred hours,
apparently the victim of foul play.



We have
no indication as yet as
to the identity of the
perpetrator.

Franks
spots Thax
and
confronts
him.

Who
the hell
are you?

I brought him in.





I didn't ask
you that. I asked
who you were.

I'm L.M.
Thaxton.



What the hell
are you doing here? I
don't know you.

Makes
us even. Who the hell
are you?



I'm Lloyd Franks,
Mr. Cochran's business
manager.

I'm Thaxton, Mr.
Cochran's prestidigitator. He
hired me yesterday.

Billie appears on the dock.



Franks
pushes
past Thax
for a
closer look
at the
body.

Thax grabs her arm.

Let's take
a walk.



As they walk away from the crowd on the dock...

How did you
happen to be around
when...?

He spots something strange in the trees.

Look!
That's what I
thought I saw
last night.

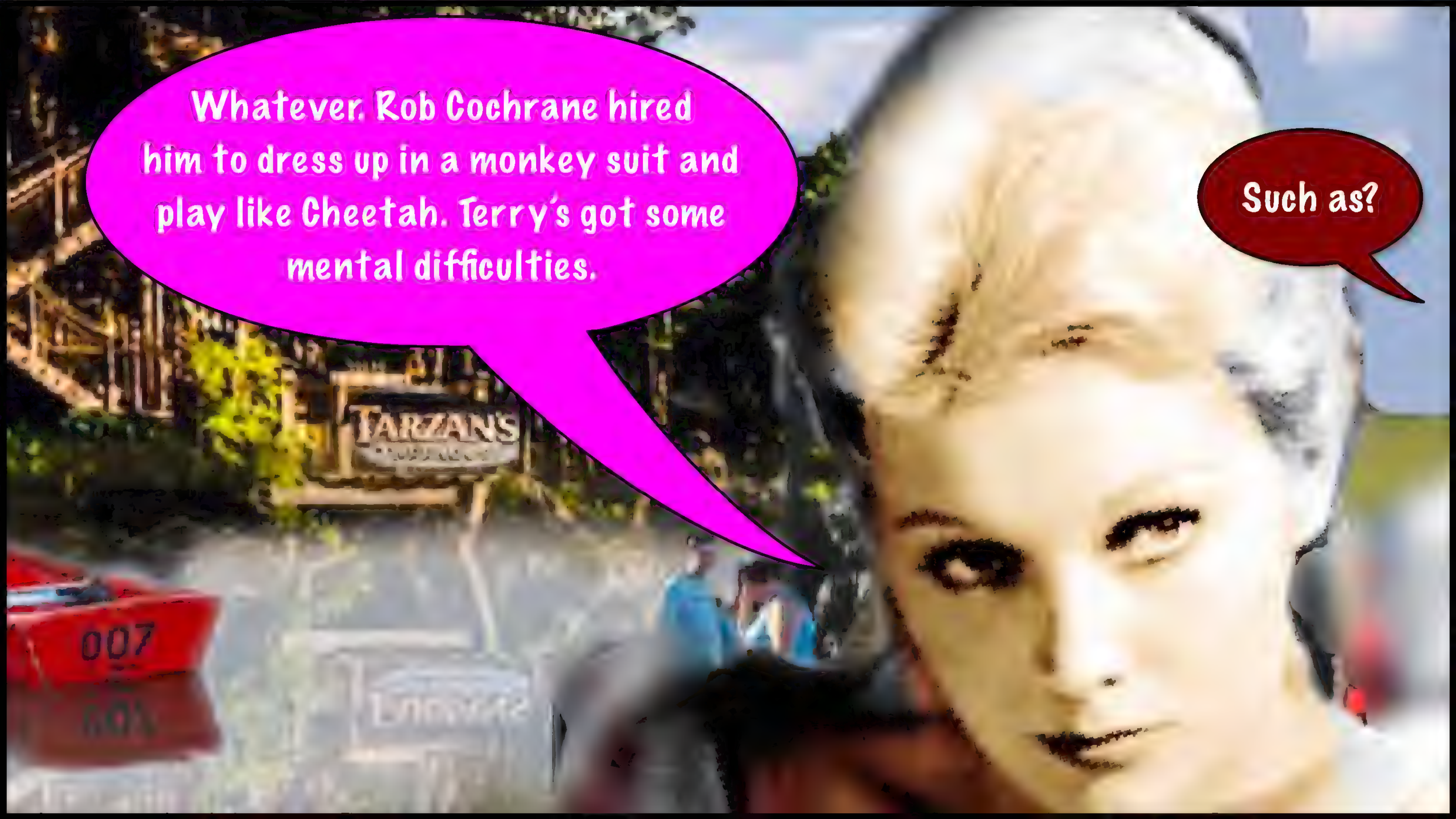




That's
Terry Orme.
He's a little
person.




You mean
a midget?



Whatever. Rob Cochrane hired
him to dress up in a monkey suit and
play like Cheetah. Terry's got some
mental difficulties.

Such as?

A woman with short, wavy white hair is looking slightly to the side. She is in a crowd of people outdoors, with trees and a building in the background. A pink speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

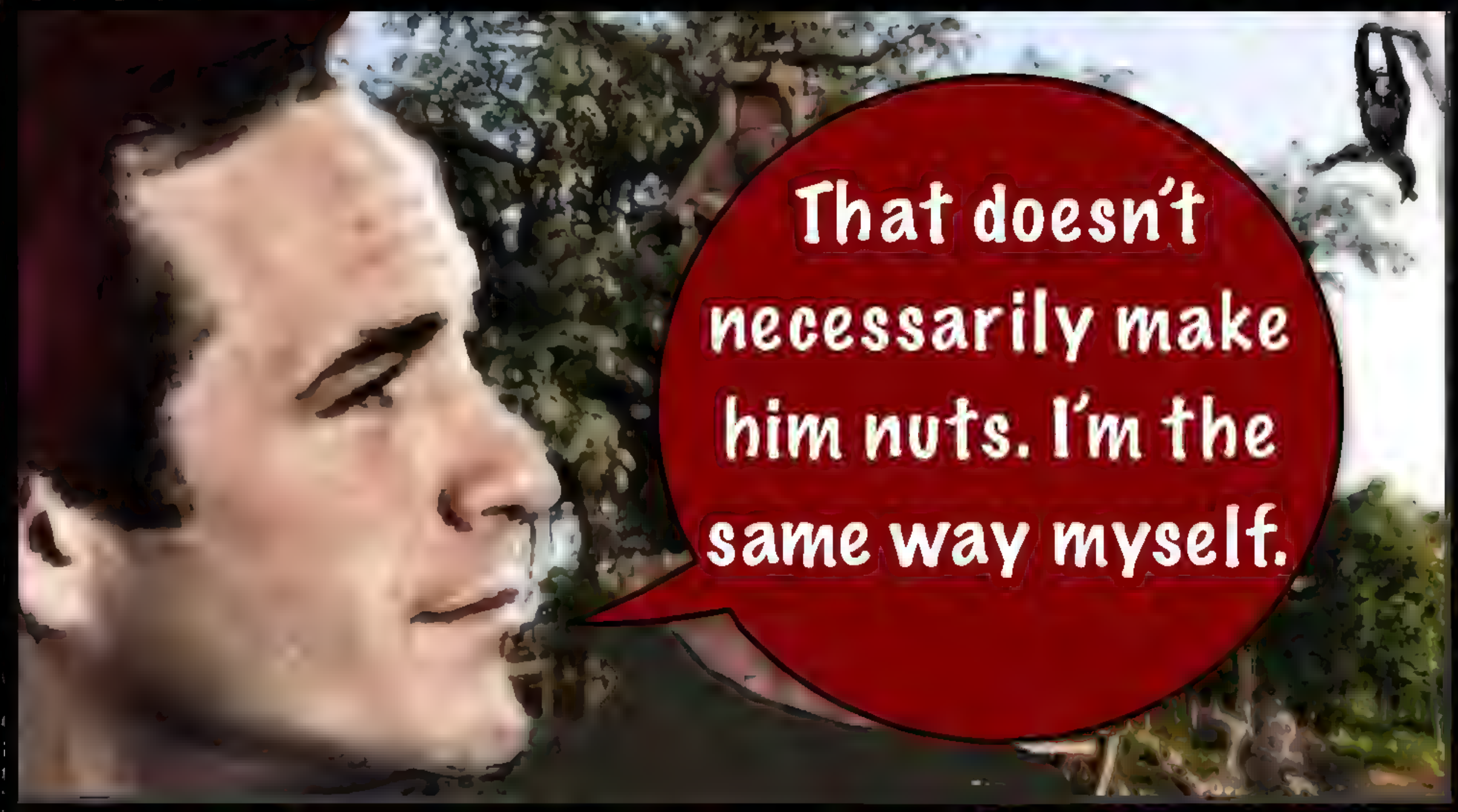
Such as he
doesn't like to
be around
people.

A close-up profile of a man's face, looking towards the right. He has dark hair and is outdoors with trees in the background. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the right side of the image.

All people?
Some people?

A woman with short, wavy white hair is looking slightly to the side. She is in a crowd of people outdoors, with trees and a building in the background. A pink speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Most
people.

A close-up profile of a man's face, looking towards the right. He has dark hair and is outdoors with trees in the background. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the right side of the image.

That doesn't
necessarily make
him nuts. I'm the
same way myself.

Terry Orme
looks down
on the
scene of
the crime.





They walk to a lake.




In the middle of the lake, Thax sees a replica of an old pirate ship.



Is that tarry old
hulk the "Hispaniola?"

How'd you
know that?



"Treasure Island"
was the first whole book I
ever read. Let's go over.

They get into a
rowboat.



Thax rows.



Do you know
what I did to get
my start in
carny?

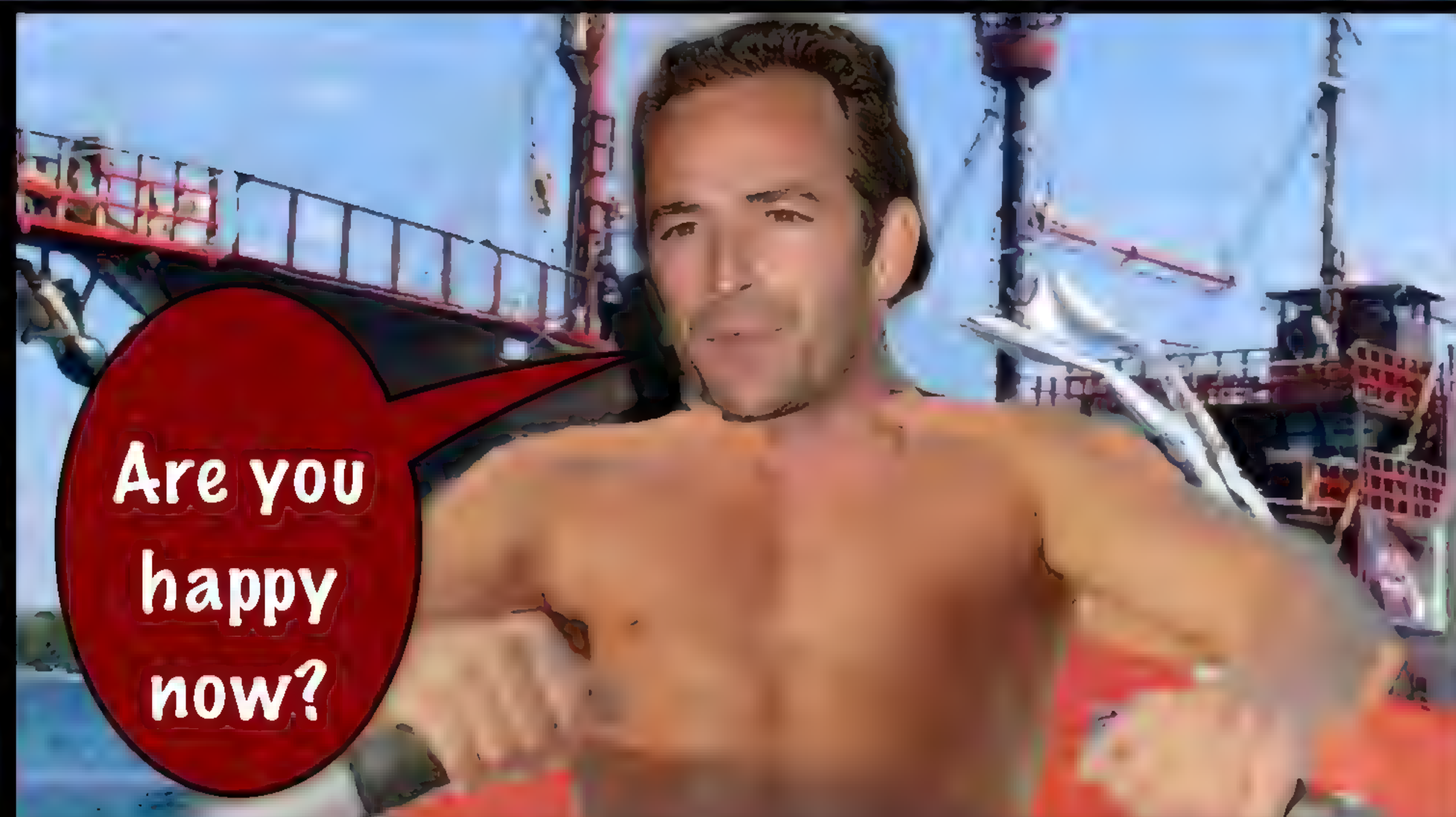
She speaks quietly, watching
him to gauge his reaction.

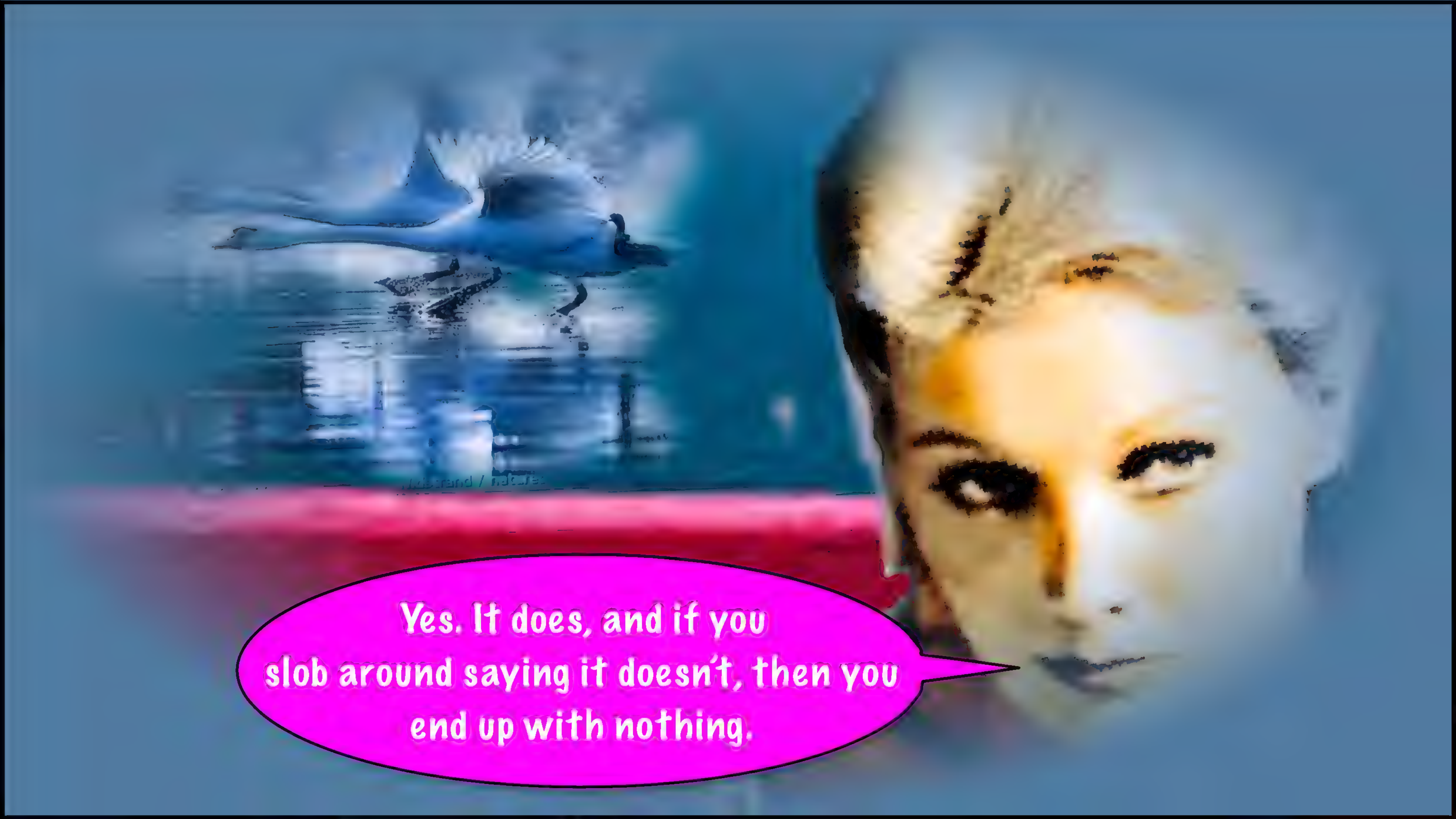


Cut it out.



The owner was a
Greek. A very fat, greasy
Greek, about fifty.





Yes. It does, and if you
slob around saying it doesn't, then you
end up with nothing.

Thax
beaches
the
rowboat
and steps
ashore.






He helps Billie out.

He tries for a little romance.

No, Thax.



A young man and woman are shown in a close-up, looking at each other. The man is on the right, wearing a dark jacket, and the woman is on the left, wearing a yellow top. They are both smiling slightly. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a body of water and trees. Three speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a red one from the man, a pink one from the woman, and a green one from an unseen person.

What's the
matter? Afraid of wasting
your time on a bum?

Something
like that.

HEY
THAX!



I GOT A MESSAGE FOR YA!

WHAT?!

Jerry, the pickpocket, yells at them from the dock.

A man in a blue polo shirt and khaki pants stands on a wooden dock. He has his right hand on his head and his left hand on his hip. Behind him is a calm pond reflecting the sky, and a line of trees in the distance. A green speech bubble with a black outline is positioned above his head, containing the text "THE COPS ARE LOOKIN' FOR YA!".

THE COPS ARE
LOOKIN' FOR YA!



We better
get back.


Thax goes over
to the
temporary police
headquarters at
the Okefenokee
Arcade.



Inside, Lt. Ferris and his partner
Sgt. Iturbi are waiting to
interrogate him.

Sit anywhere.





What's your name?



Thaxton.

I'm still waiting.

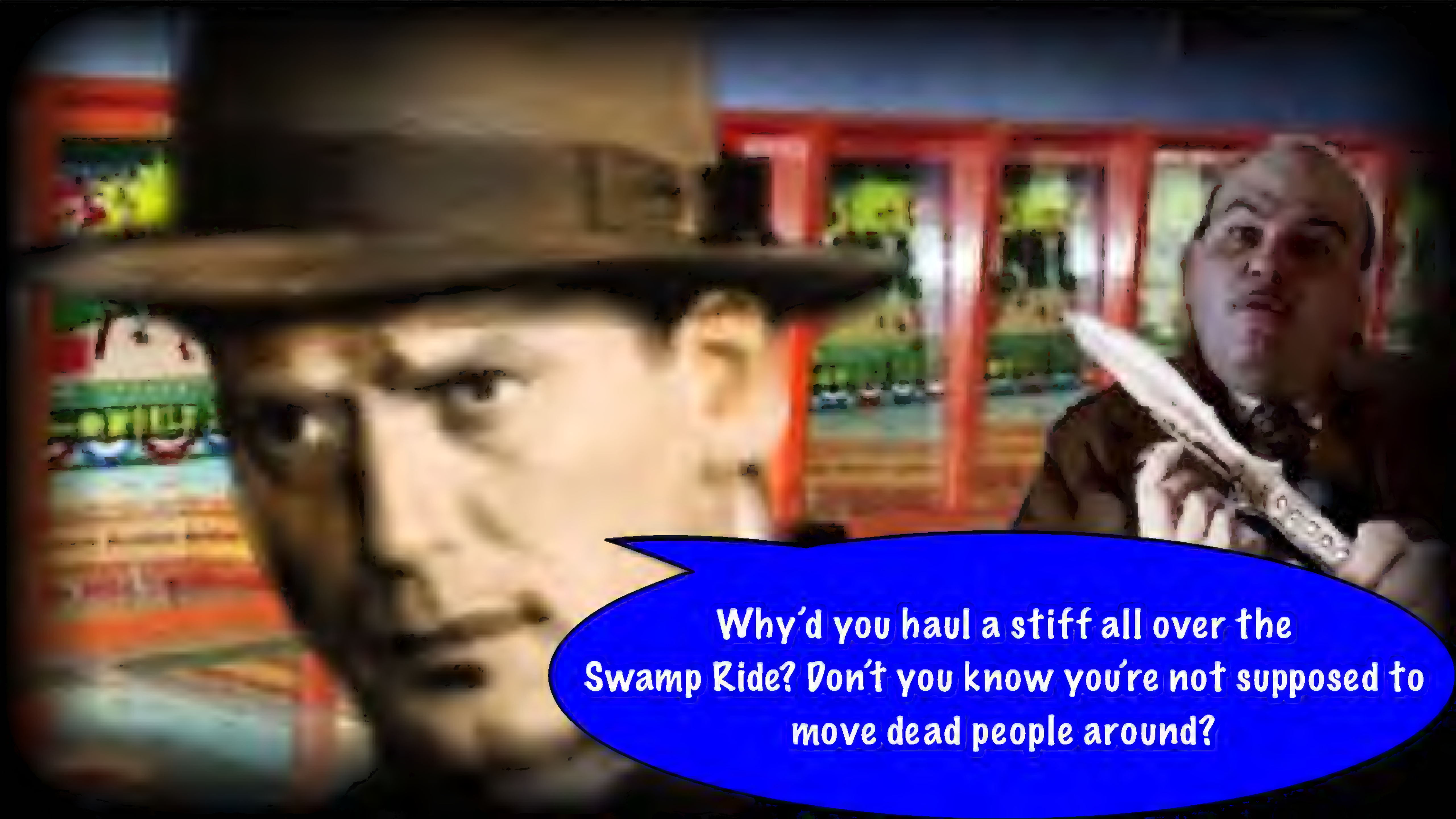
Leslie Mendlesohn Thaxton.

Where are you from?

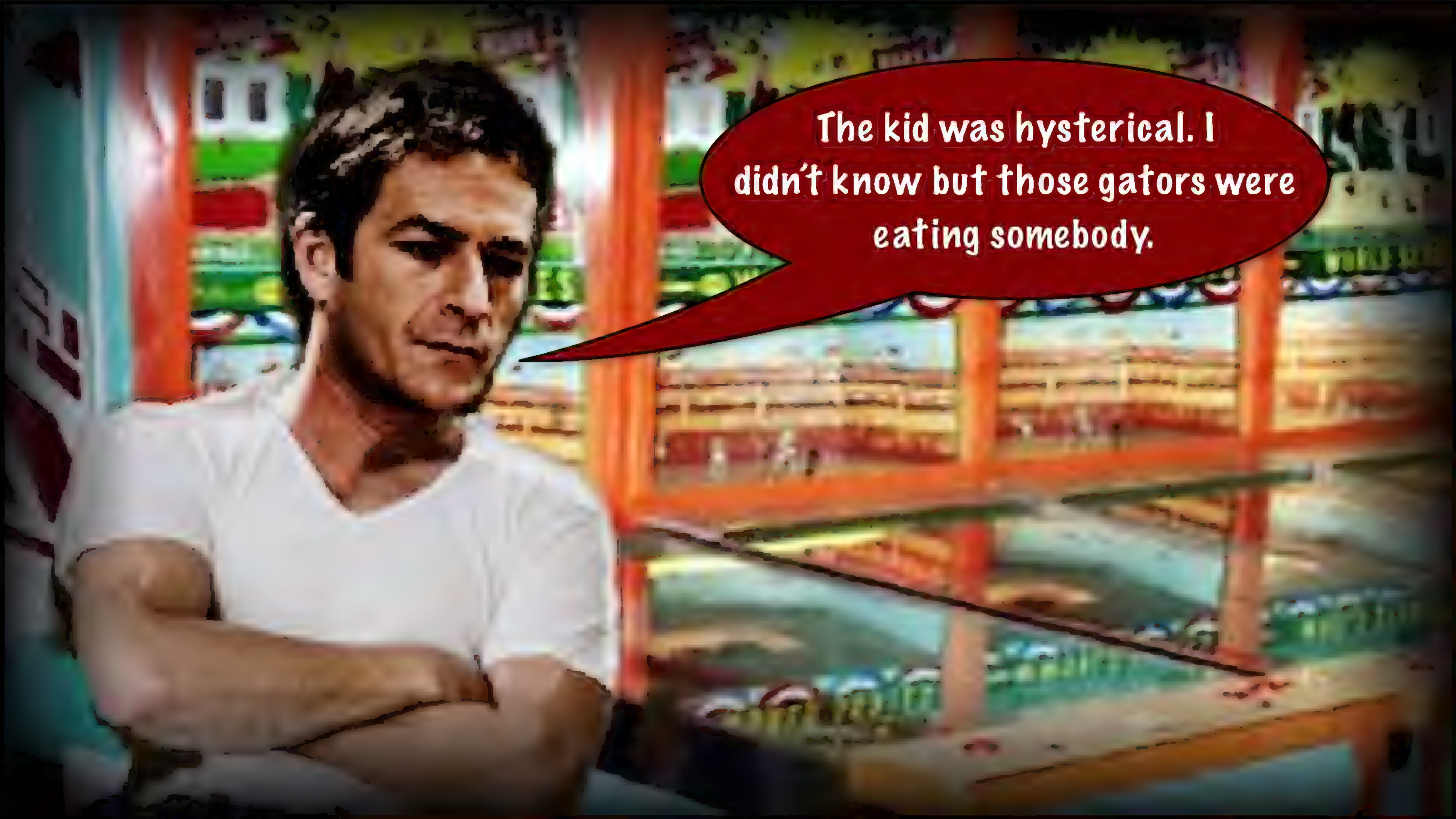


Hammond, Indiana.


What a shithole.



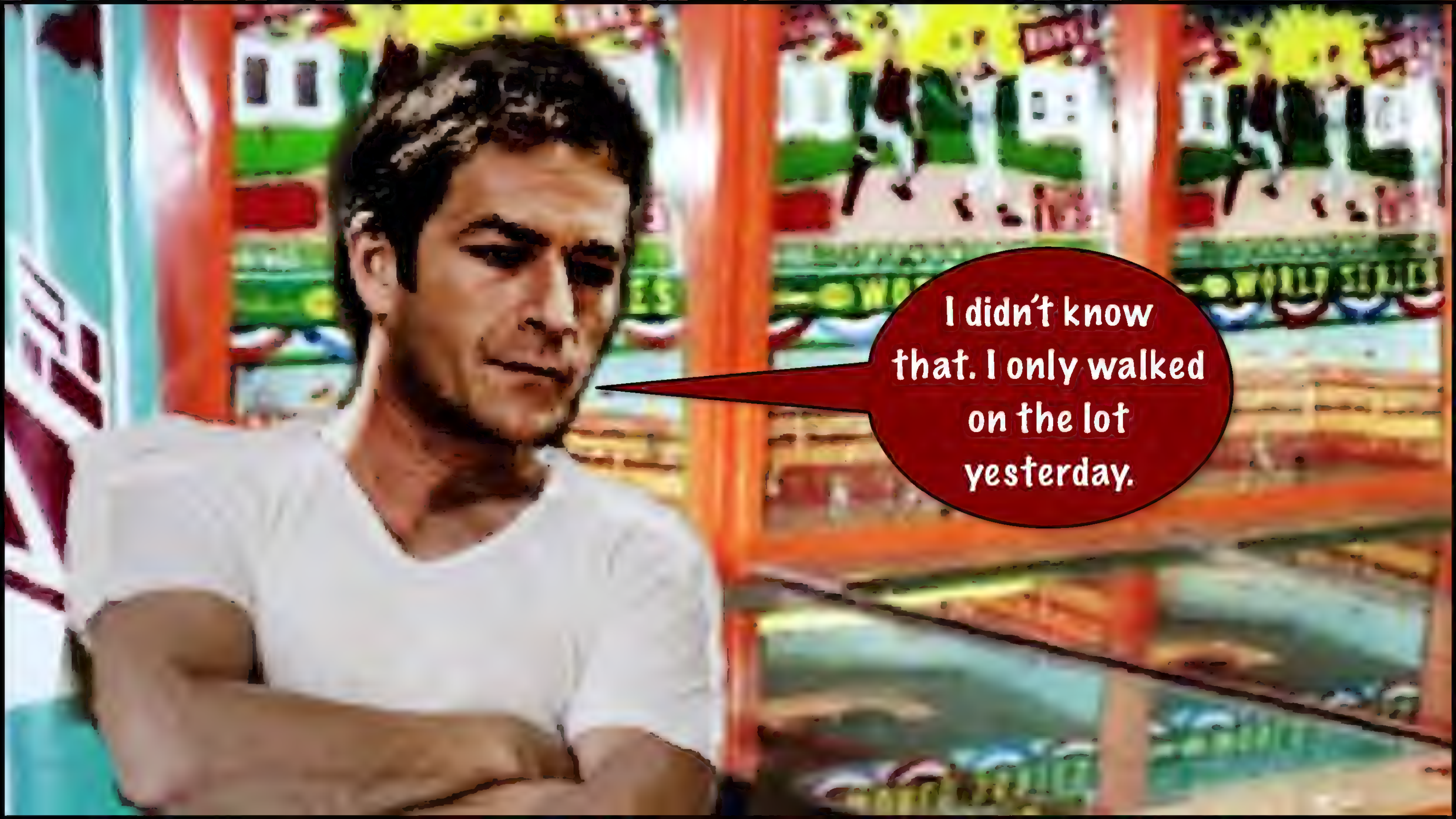
Why'd you haul a stiff all over the Swamp Ride? Don't you know you're not supposed to move dead people around?

A man with dark, curly hair and a white t-shirt is sitting on a boat. He is looking slightly to his right with a serious expression. The boat has a wooden railing and a red frame. In the background, there is a body of water and some buildings. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing text.


The kid was hysterical. I
didn't know but those gators were
eating somebody.

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark top hat is shown in profile, looking towards the left. He is standing in front of a red metal fence. Behind the fence is a body of water with several alligators. In the background, there are trees and a sign that reads "WORLD ALLIGATORS".

According to Lloyd
Franks, the business manager,
those gators are safe as
housepets.



I didn't know
that. I only walked
on the lot
yesterday.

A man in a white shirt is on the left, looking towards the right. A man in a dark suit and tie is on the right, looking towards the left. They are standing in front of a large window with a wooden frame. Outside the window, there is a garden with green plants and a white building. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

What was Jimmy Bentley doing out there at that time of the morning?

How do I know?


Maybe it's part of his job.

Recognize it?

Lt. Ferris
takes the
knife from
Sgt. Iturbi.
It's one of
May's.

No.



A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a dark fedora-style hat. A large, bloody knife is stuck into his chest, with the handle visible. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a red building and some greenery.

You didn't notice
it sticking out of Mr.
Cochrane's chest?


A close-up, high-contrast image of a man wearing a black top hat and a dark suit. He is holding a large, ornate knife with a silver handle and a dark blade. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a street scene with buildings and trees. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "I don't recognize it.".

I don't
recognize it.



Ever see
one like
it?

Sure. Knife
thrower's. Balanced.



Know
who owns this
partticular one?

They all
look the
same, so I
couldn't say.



No prints.

Except mine.

Lt. Ferris pretends to stab someone.

Like this?

Bates. Norman Bates.
Heh-heh.



A close-up photograph of a man and a woman in a close embrace. The man is in the foreground, looking slightly to the right, with a red speech bubble overlaid on his face. The woman is behind him, smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing some greenery and a building.

No, I'd remember
something like that.



I hope so,
Thaxton, because
withholding
information makes
our job harder and
we hate that.

Later.

Alive! Alive!

Find The Pea

3 SHELL GAME

PRIZES

Gabby has
set up a
joint for
Thax
across
from the
Palace of
Illusions,
where...

Bill Duff spiels from his
bally.



Duff gives Thax the evil
eye.




Thax gives it right back.




Gabby shows Thax
around his joint.

What's with
the flowers?





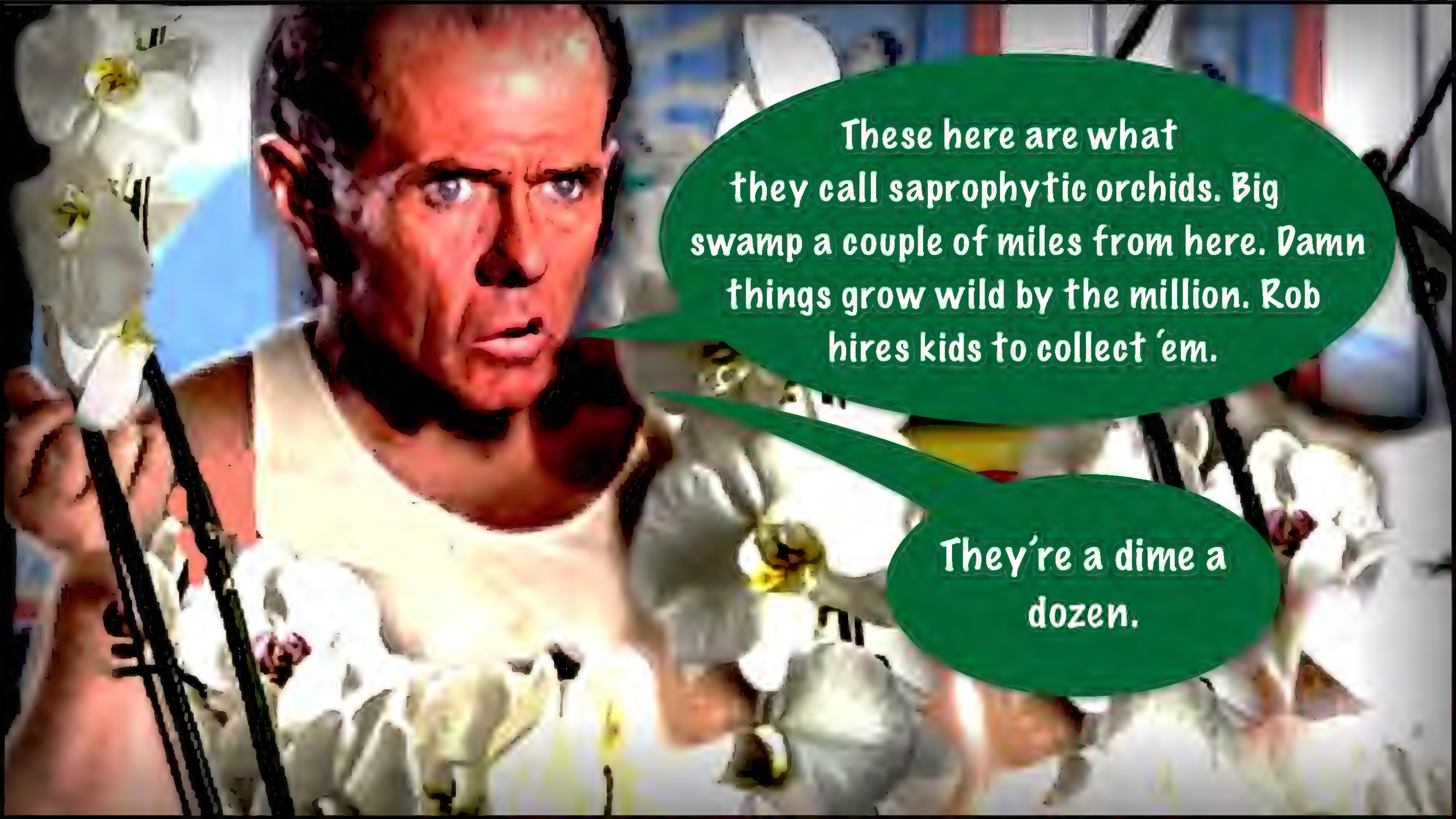
The
boss don't allow for
cash gambling. You let
the marks win an orchid.
You're just here for the
atmosphere. Didn't Rob
tell you that?



Yeah, sure.
But a buck for an
orchid?

PRIZES

GAME

A man with a serious expression, wearing a white tank top, is holding a large, white, saccate orchid. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with other plants and a blue sky. Two green speech bubbles are overlaid on the right side of the image.

These here are what
they call saprophytic orchids. Big
swamp a couple of miles from here. Damn
things grow wild by the million. Rob
hires kids to collect 'em.

They're a dime a
dozen.



Just like spielers.

Huh?

Something Cochrane
said to me last night.



I'm
gonna miss the
old bastard.



Seemed
like a great guy.
Who do you think
did it?



Who do you
think did it for
Christ's sake?



Shit, I
don't know. I just
started here,
remember.



Get off
it Thax. I know all about
you and May. Word gets
around.

That's
what everyone keeps
telling me.



PALACE OF ILLUSION

THE WORLD'S STRANGEST PEOPLE


THE BIG EYES

Duff's
big mouth has been
going, huh?



Did I say so?

You didn't
have to.

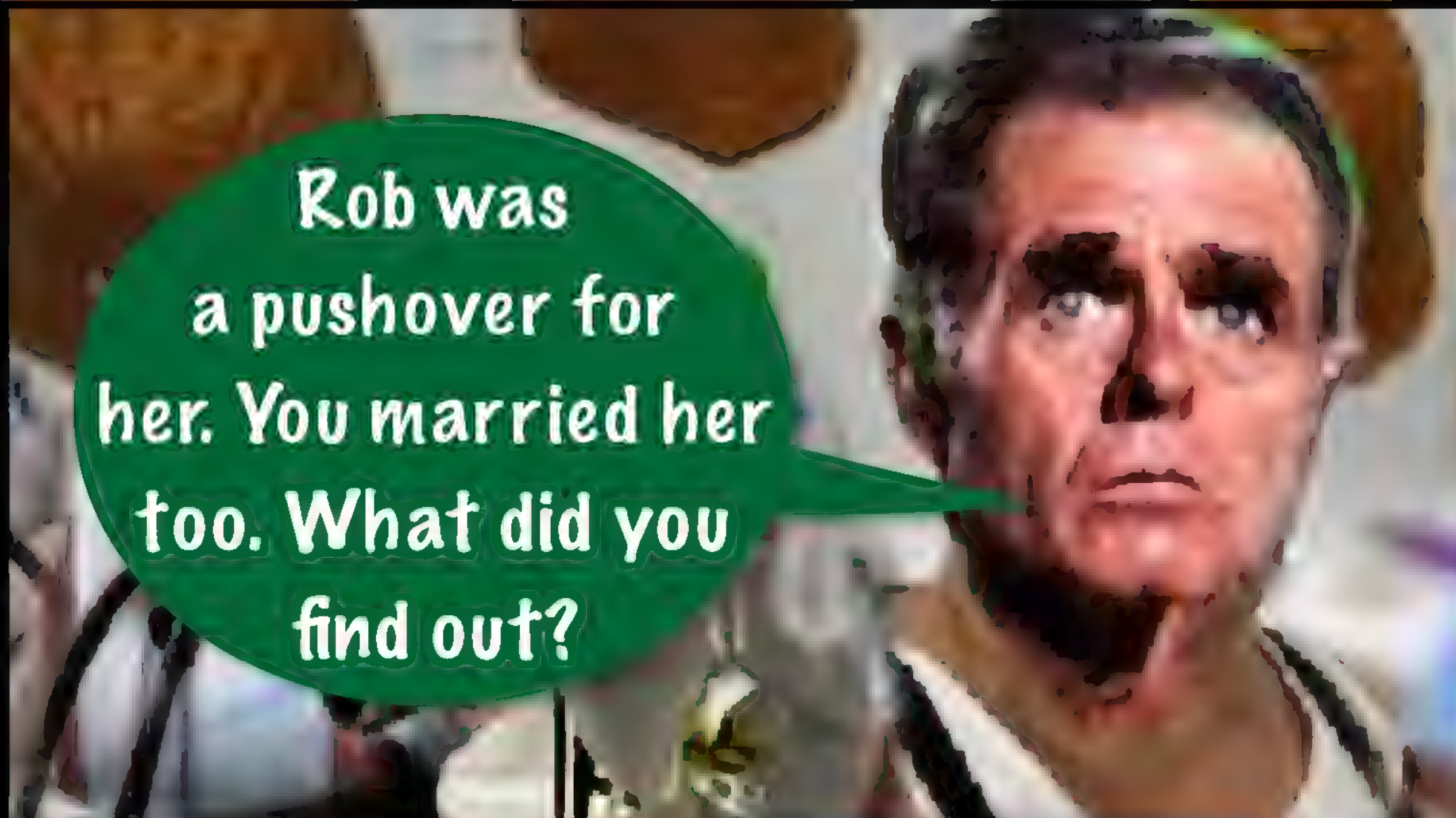
A man and a woman are looking at a bouquet of white flowers. The man is on the right, wearing a white shirt, and the woman is on the left, wearing a white shirt. A red speech bubble is positioned above the flowers, containing the text "You don't like May much, do you?".

You don't like
May much, do you?



Name me someone
around here who does.

Cochrane must
have liked her.



Rob was
a pushover for
her. You married her
too. What did you
find out?



I can't recall.



Let's
just call it
a mystery.



And
everyone thinks she
killed poor Rob.

A man with a serious expression, wearing a white shirt and a black strap across his chest, is surrounded by white flowers. A green speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Can't stop
people thinking.



Step right up ladies
and gentlemen, and please keep your
eyes on the pea.

Thax's skilled hands rapidly manipulate three walnut shells and a little pea.

As the marks gather, Thax
continues his spiel.

Here we go. Carnival
croquet. Who'll risk a dollar
to win an orchid?




A hot blonde
with a sailor in
tow steps up.
She gives Thax
the eye.



A woman with long, wavy blonde hair is shown from the chest up. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a solid red color.


Now here's a
pretty lady.

A man with dark hair and a slight smile is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a white t-shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

Perhaps you, sailor man,
would care to risk a buck. You can see
how much it would mean to your
beautiful girl, and I don't mean the
one tatooed on your arm.

A white, irregularly shaped object, possibly a piece of paper or a bag, is shown. It has two large, brown, oval-shaped spots on it. The text "The Pea" is written in green, stylized letters above the spots.

The Pea



Guy aboard
ship taught me all about
this. It's a game where
you can't win.

He can't
cheat if we both watch
him close. C'mon Eddie,
give him a dollar.

The sailor slaps down a
dollar.



Step aside folks, let
the sailor see the pea.

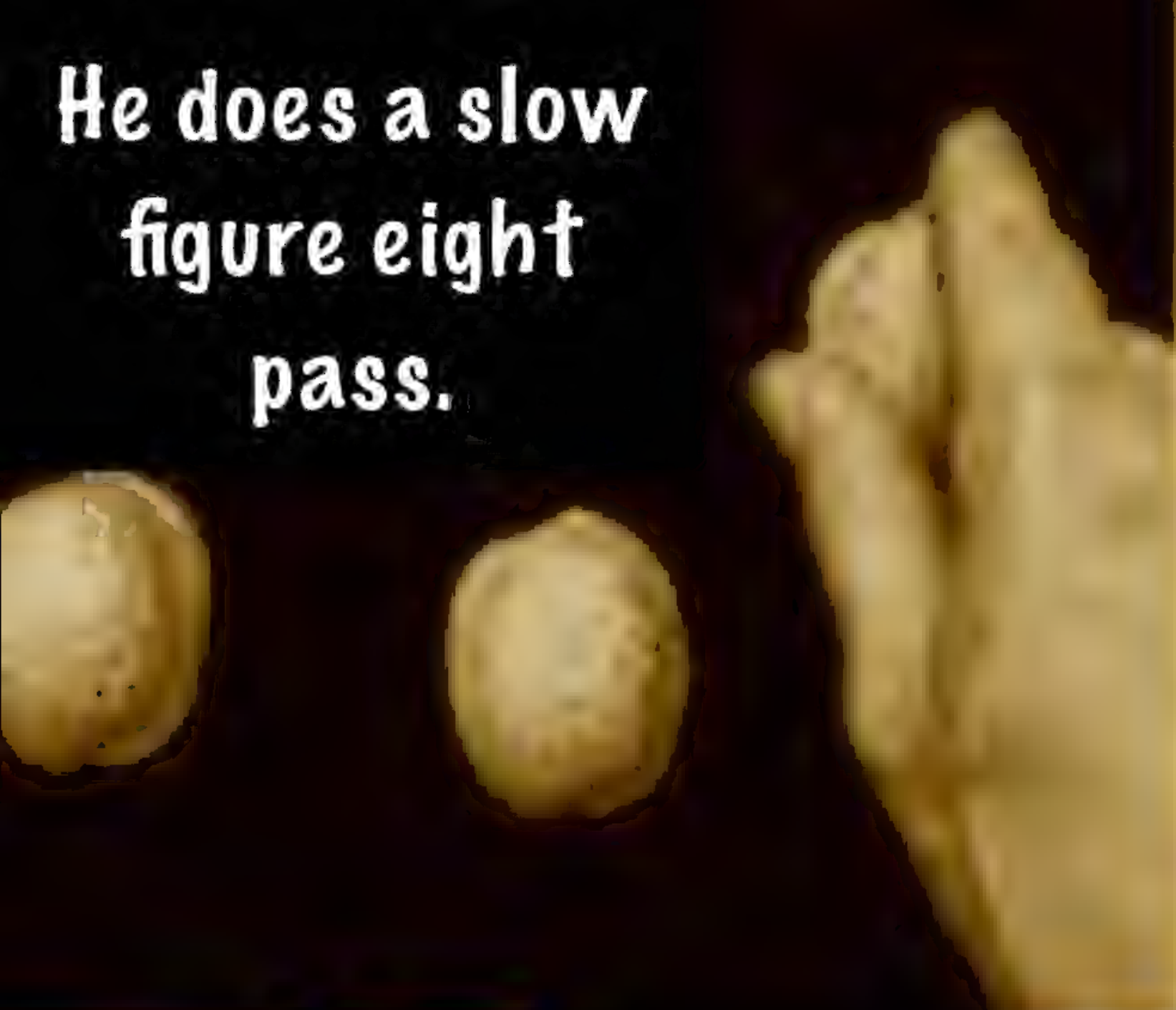


Slow, like you do it
for the broads.





Thax covers the pea with the shell.



He does a slow
figure eight
pass.



The sailor taps
the correct
shell.



Thax palms the pea and turns over an empty shell.

A man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is holding a large stack of US dollar bills, with a \$100 bill visible at the top. The background is blurred, showing green and red elements. Two text overlays are present: a black box in the top right and a red speech bubble on the right side.

Thax puts the dollar in his pocket.

Every now and
then the gambler
wins a little.





I want another shot!

You've forgotten
something, haven't you matey?

The sailor
tosses a
twenty on
the board.





Thax shows him the pea.

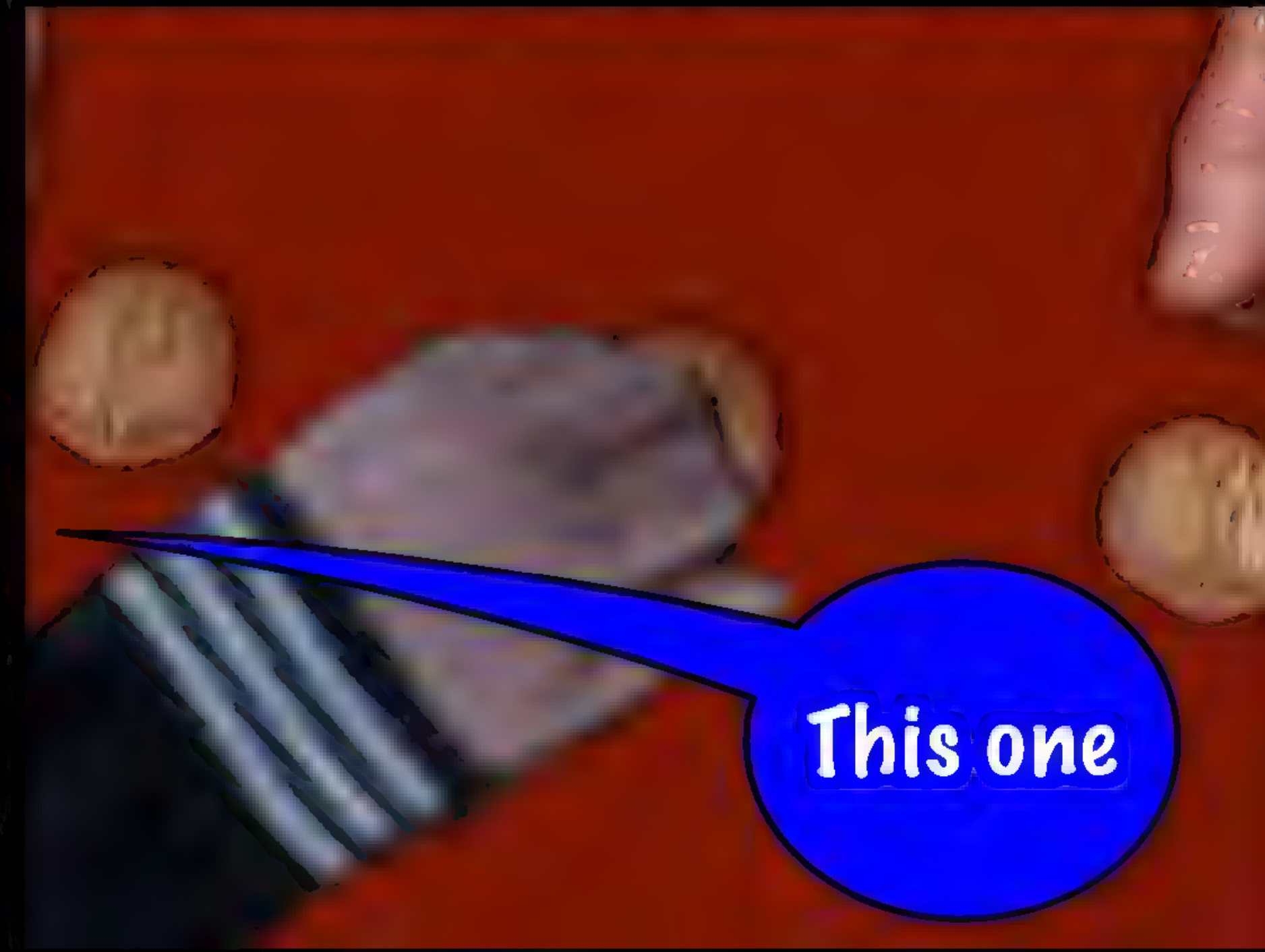


He covers it and makes a slow pass.

The
sailor's
eyes
follow
the pea.



The sailor
covers the
shell with
his hand.



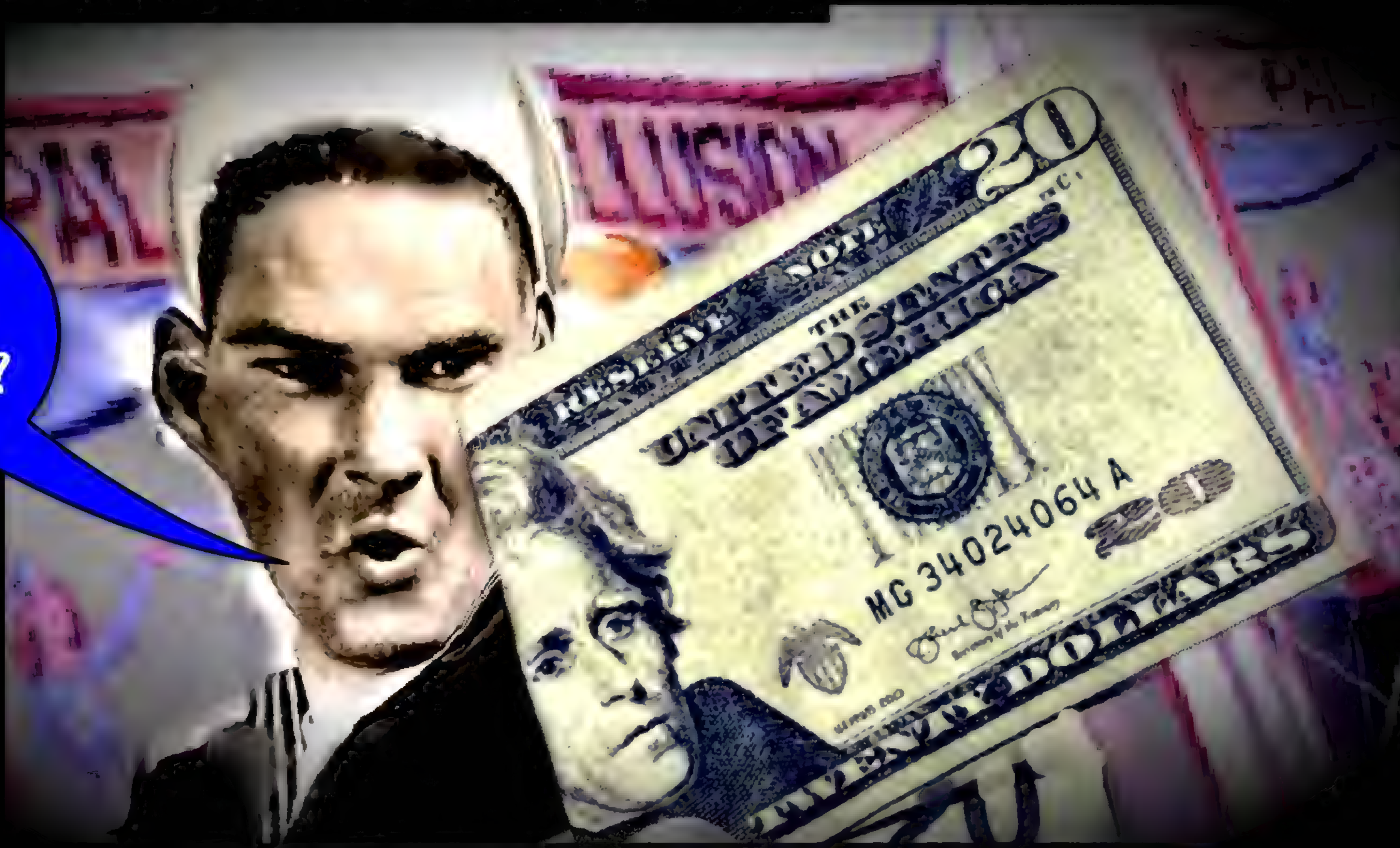
This one



The Pea

The sailor then throws down another twenty.

Care to
double-up?





I'll take
that bet.

The sailor picks up the shell.



It's empty.

Thax grabs the Sailor's cash and
turns back to the crowd.

A tough
break for
the sailor
boy.

Who's
next?

Who'll
risk a dollar
to win an
orchid?



Thax hands an orchid to the
sailor's girl.

Compliments of
the management.



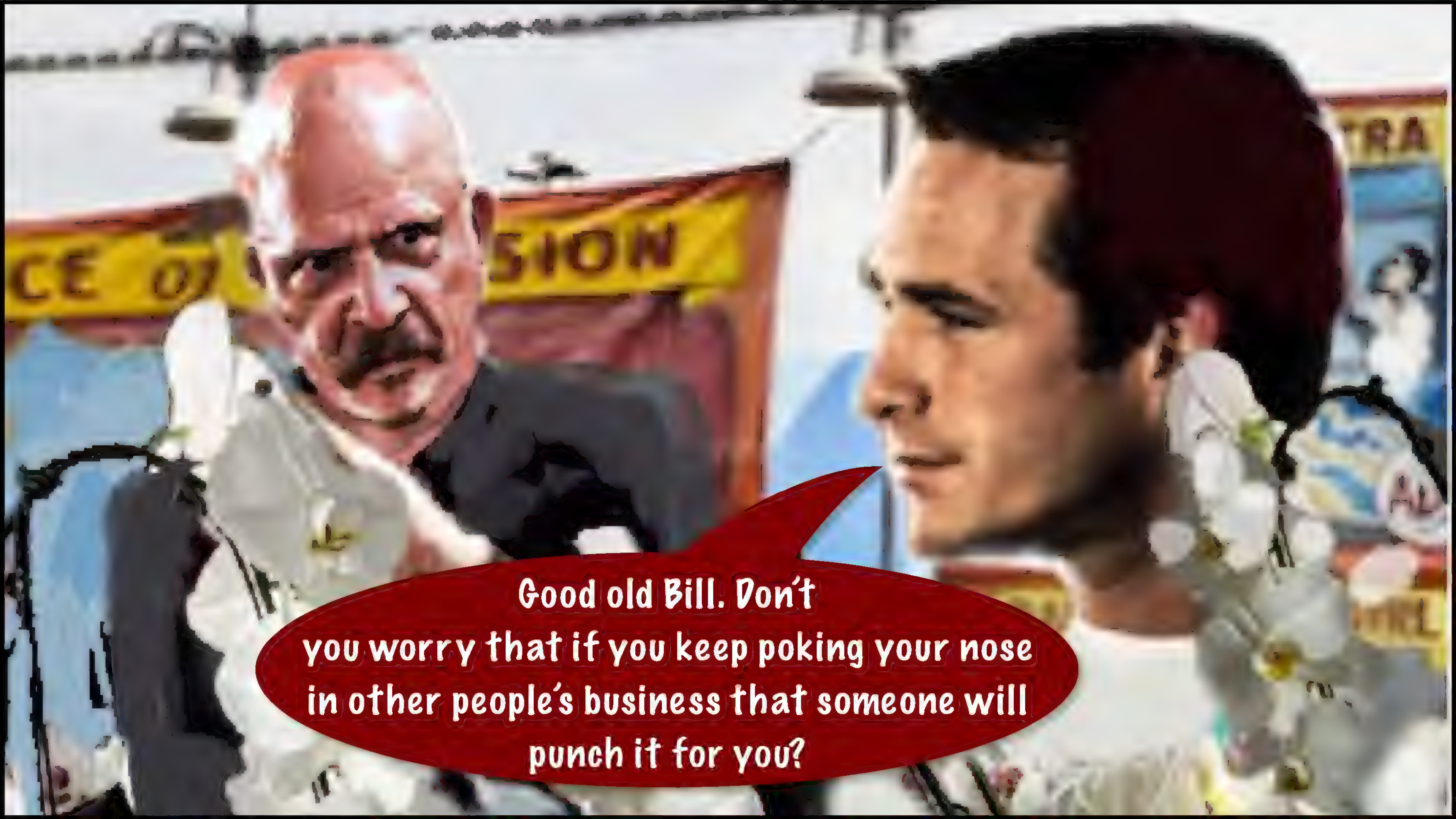


Bill Duff steps down from his bally.


He walks over to Thax's joint.

Do something for
you, Bill?

Thax, that forty dollar rip
you just pulled? That don't fly around here. You
get caught, they'll fire your ass.

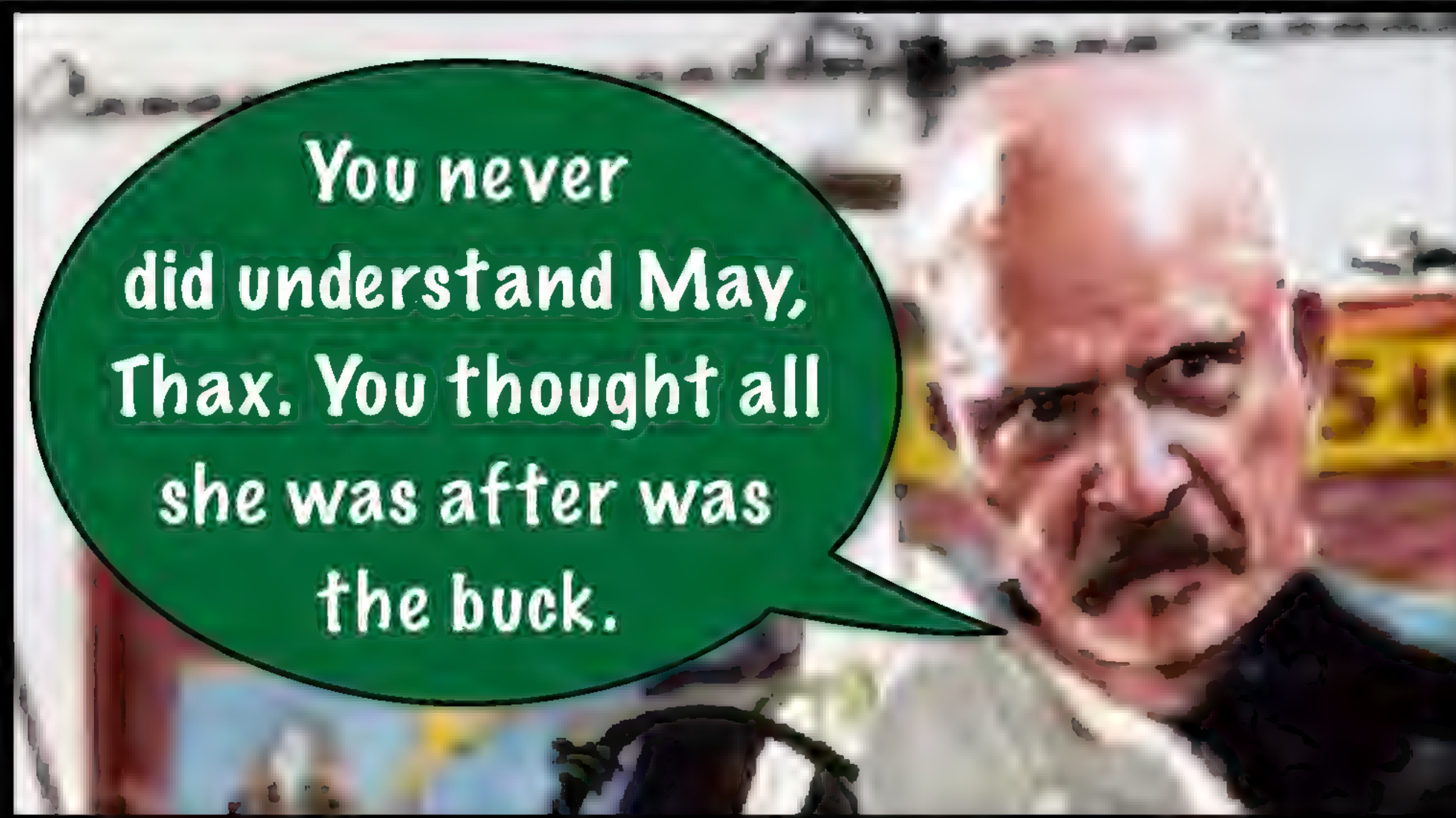


Good old Bill. Don't
you worry that if you keep poking your nose
in other people's business that someone will
punch it for you?




I'm just
telling you is all. That
old time reaming don't go
here. Old man Cochrane
won't...


That was yesterday,
Bill. Today all I have to do is tip May
fifty percent of the take.




You never
did understand May,
Thax. You thought all
she was after was
the buck.



And what
was she after, Bill?
Besides the lump in
your pants?



May had a
tough life. But she's got
her good side. She offered me a
hand when I showed up here
down on my luck.



Yes, I can't deny she
was good to you, Bill and
you've certainly made a
big success of it.



Duff storms off.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a long, flowing red dress, stands in the center of the frame. She is looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a vintage-style sign with a red border and blue background, featuring a woman in a green dress and the text "MISS FLEET" and "RADIO CITY". The scene is framed by large, white, stylized flowers in the foreground. A red speech bubble points from the text "Hey Billie!" to the woman. A black box with white text is in the top right corner.

Billie walks by. Thax
spots her.

Hey Billie!

Billie stops, then walks
over to Thax.

A still from a movie showing Marilyn Monroe on the left, looking towards a man on the right. She has blonde hair and is wearing a red dress. The man has dark hair and is wearing a light-colored shirt. They are surrounded by white flowers. Overlaid on the image are a black text box in the top left, a pink speech bubble in the center, and a red speech bubble on the right.


Did the
police give you a
hard time?

No.

A woman with short, wavy blonde hair and a man with a full brown beard are shown from the chest up. The woman is on the left, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a white top with a red collar. The man is on the right, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark jacket. In the background, there is a window with a white frame and some greenery. A bouquet of white and red flowers is visible on the left side of the frame.


Don't
do that, Thax.
There's people
around.

Do what?




Stare at
me like that. Oh,
honestly, Thax,
what's wrong
with you?

I
can dream,
can't I?

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, standing in a field of white flowers. The woman, on the left, has blonde hair and is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The man, on the right, has dark hair and is looking towards the woman. A red speech bubble with white text is positioned between them, pointing towards the man. The background is filled with white flowers and green foliage.

You going to
work now?





Don't look at me like
that. It's just something
personal I have to do.

Night
school?

Hardly.

Billie touches his hand.

Not mad?
I mean about
tonight?

Not as long as we can
do it twice next time.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a pink dress with a red sash, is looking towards the camera. A speech bubble is positioned to her left, containing the text "Just twice?".


Just twice?

Later, as Thax lies smoking in the dark, Terry Orme, the Monkey Man, swings in through the window.





Orme slips out of his
monkey suit. Thax
lights a match.

A close-up shot of a man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a brown fur-collared jacket, looking down at a small, grey, scruffy dog. The dog is looking up at the man. A purple speech bubble with a black outline points from the man's mouth towards the dog.

There's a lantern
under that bed.

Thax finds the lamp and lights it.

You want
me to leave
just say so.





Go, stay, it's
the same to me.

Thax walks over to Orme and extends his hand.

I'll stay.



If we're going to
be roommates, why
not be friends?

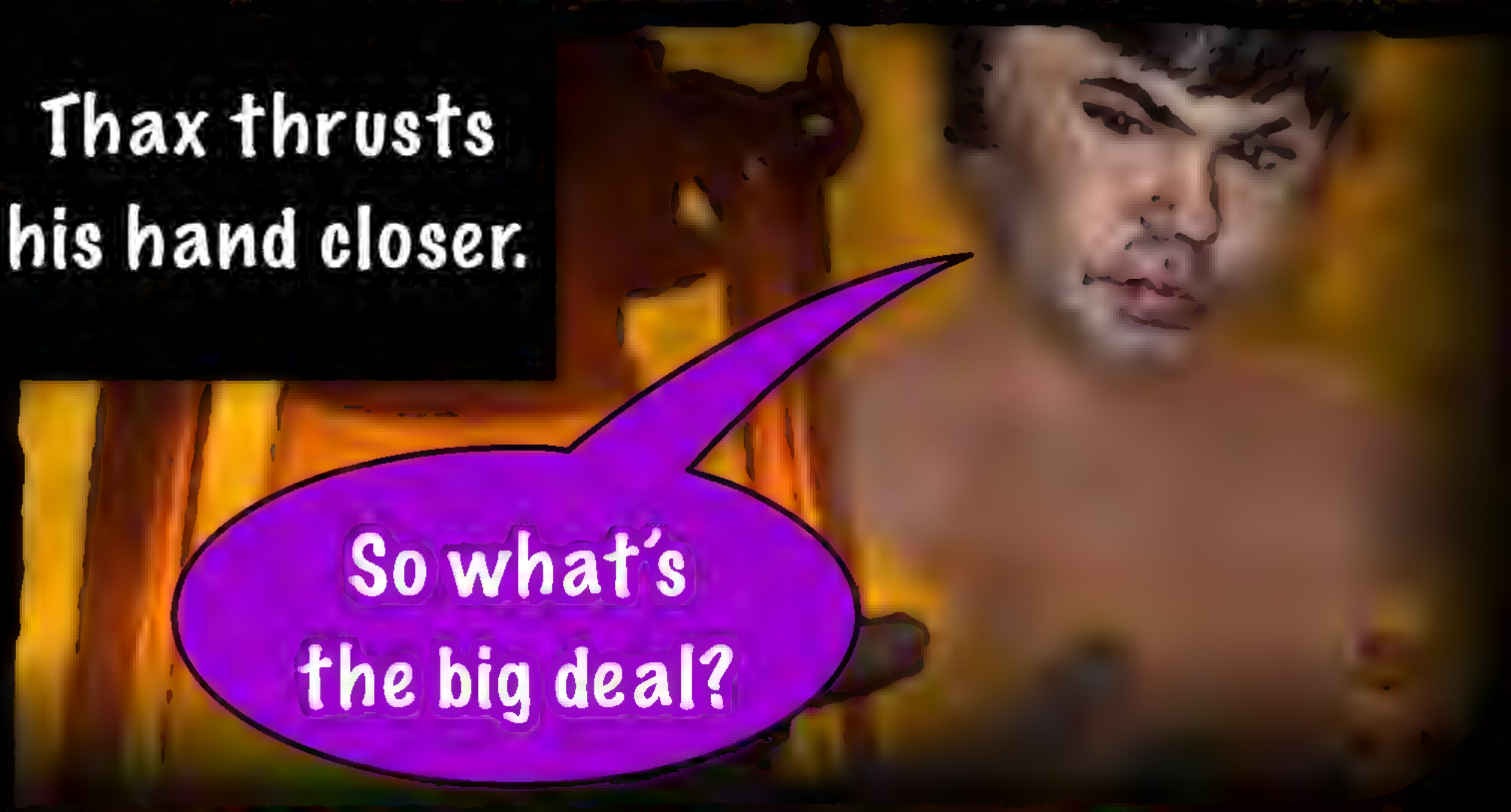


I don't like to
be touched.



Last chance.


Thax thrusts
his hand closer.



So what's
the big deal?

Orme reluctantly
shakes hands.



A scene from a movie showing two men in a thatched hut at night. One man is reading a book while the other speaks.


I got enough dough I
don't have to live up here
if I don't want to.



I stay
by myself because I
don't like people, most of
them anyhow.



Same with me.

A man with dark, curly hair is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the left with a surprised or excited expression. He is wearing a dark jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a blue sky and some greenery.

The marks watch
me scramble around in that ape suit
and they think I'm a real monkey. But as far
as I'm concerned, I'm making a monkey
out of them.

I wouldn't
have this job if I didn't
like climbing around. You see
things. Things you'd never
dream of.

Orme spots a pile of books
next to Thax's bed.

Guess you read a lot, huh?

Books are a man's best friend.

Me.

Who says that?

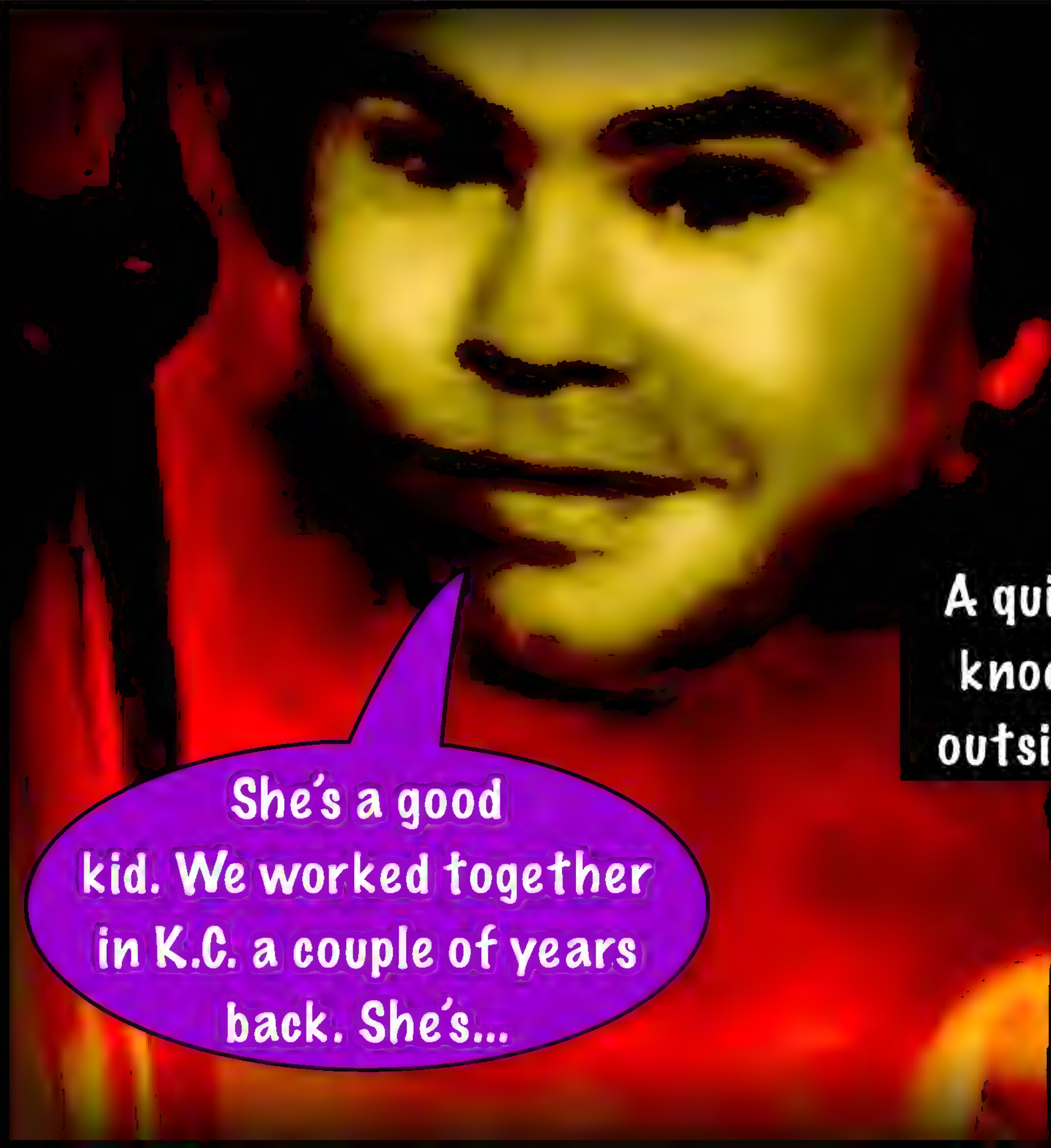


But Orme isn't listening.

**You making it with
Billie?**


A man with dark hair and a slight beard, wearing a yellow shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking towards the camera. Above him is a large, open structure with a thatched roof made of palm fronds. The background shows a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a sandy area and some greenery. A red speech bubble with a black outline is superimposed over the image, pointing towards the man. The text inside the bubble is white and reads "Who's asking?".

Who's asking?



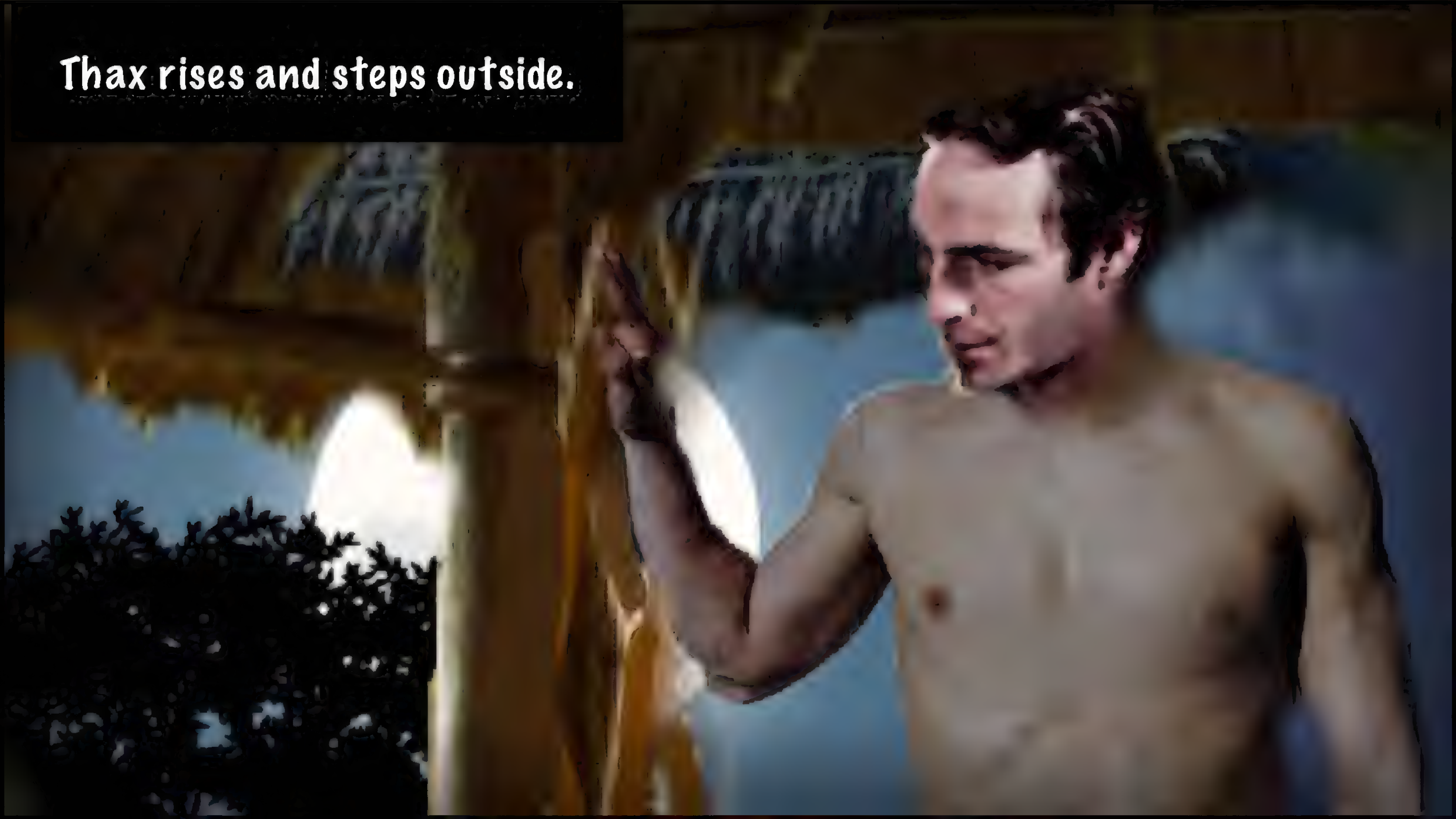
She's a good
kid. We worked together
in K.C. a couple of years
back. She's...

A quiet
knock
outside.



A look of terror crosses Orme's face.

Thax rises and steps outside.



He looks down. A spotlight blazes over the deserted Swamp Ride.



Orme whispers from the shadows.

Who is it? A
guy, or a girl?

Just a noise in the night, I
guess. I don't see anyone.



Thax walks back into Tarzan's hut.



Orme has vanished.



A small rowboat lands on a sandy beach.



Thax steps
onto
Treasure
Island then
quotes Long
John Silver.

"Ah, this here is a sweet
spot for a lad to get ashore on."

A sign points down a woody path.



Thax arrives at Flint's
Treasure Pit.



At the bottom lies a half-buried sea chest.





Thax gets a sneaky feeling.

A WILDMAN JUMPS UP!

"I'm poor Ben
Gunn I am..."

...and
I haven't
spoken with a
Christian in
three years."

The Wildman peels off his
beard and wig.

Scared
you, huh?

It gets 'em all,
especially the young
chicks. I can make them
leap halfway out of
their panties.



A man with short brown hair and a slight smile is wearing a white t-shirt. He is positioned in front of a body of water with green trees in the background. A red speech bubble with a black outline is placed to his left, containing the text "I don't wear panties." in white. The image has a slightly grainy, digital quality.

I don't
wear panties.

You're
Thaxton,
aren't you?
The new guy
with the
hots for
Billie?





She's a
good kid.



You
know
Terry?



That's what Terry
Orme said. Maybe I
should start to wonder
just how good Billie is.



We're roomies up
in the treehouse.


A man with dark, wavy hair and a light beard, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, stands in a field of tall, dry grass under a blue sky. He is looking slightly to his left. Four green speech bubbles with black outlines are overlaid on the image, containing text. The bubbles are connected by lines to the man's mouth area.

No kidding.
I never knew
Terry bunked up
there.


He's not the
only screwball
around here.

I bunk aboard the
Hispaniola myself.

By the way,
my name's Mike
Ransome.

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white t-shirt, stands in a grassy field. In the background, there is a blue lake and a line of trees. A red speech bubble is positioned to the right of the man, containing text. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

The man who
reads books.
Shake brother.

A man with dark hair and a brown shirt is holding a small, light-colored animal, possibly a cat or a small dog, in his arms. He is standing in a field of tall, dry grass. A green speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing the text: "C'mon, Thax. I want you to see my schooner."

C'mon, Thax.
I want you to see
my schooner.

It was all
my idea. Old Man
Cochrane let me
design the whole
layout.

We pick
up the suckers
over at the dock,
and give 'em each
a treasure
map.

It doesn't bother the
marks to dig in the hot sun
for a chest full of Dreamland
keychains and junk.





Ransome leads Thax aboard the Hispaniola.

They cross the deck...



...and climb through
the hatch into the
cabin below.



Thax surveys
Ransome's
home.
Windows
over the
stern give a
nice light. He
spots some
bookshelves
in the corner.





TREASURE
ISLAND

TREASURE
ISLAND

TREASURE
ISLAND

MERRY MEN
—
DR. JEKYLL

DAVID
BALFOUR

ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON

ROBERT
LOUIS
STEVENSON

THE
WRECKERS

ROBERT
LOUIS
STEVENSON

MERRY MEN
—
DR. JEKYLL

ROBERT
LOUIS
STEVENSON

STEVENSON
VOL. VII
THE MERRY MEN
DR. JEKYLL AND
MR. HYDE
PRINCE OTTO

SCRIBNER'S

ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON

THE MERRY
MEN



Thax picks up a copy of "Treasure Island" and opens it.

Ransome puts a record on the hi-fi
and heats a pot of coffee.

You know what I
like about Stevenson?



The deserving
always find what they're
searching for...

...and live happily
ever after. That's the way I
like a story to end.

You serious?

TREASURE
ISLAND

STEVENSON
VOL. VII

THE MERRY MEN
DR. JEKYLL AND
MR. HYDE
PRINCE OTTO

MERRY MEN
—
DR. JEKYLL

ROBERT
LOUIS
STEVENSON

DAVID
BALFOUR

ROBERT

Kind of. Actually
I do believe you can put a certain
spin on life. Make it come out the way
you want. But it has nothing to do
with being deserving.





Good luck.

Thanks. Coffee?

TREASURE
ISLAND

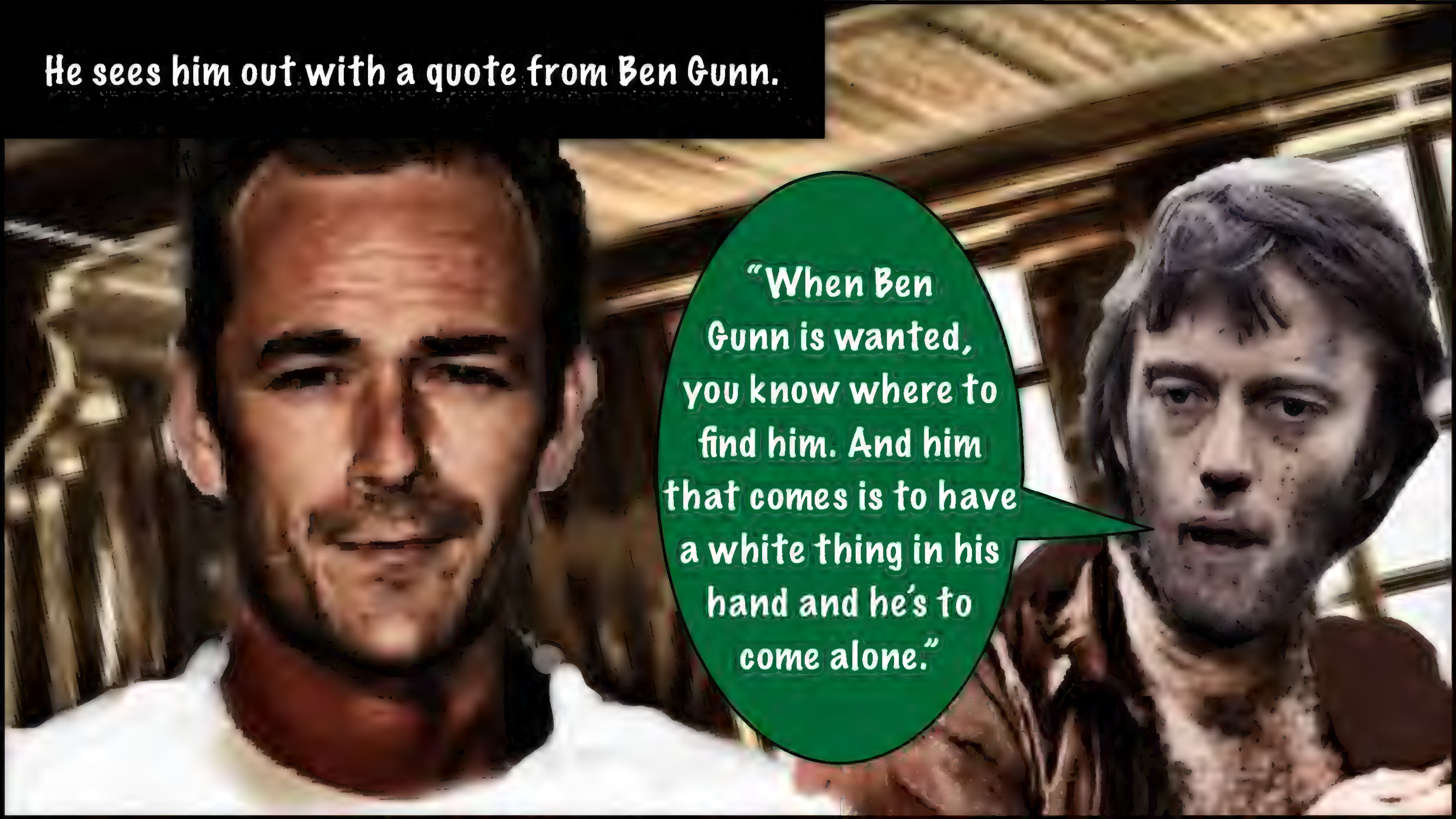


No thanks.
Gotta run. We got
marks to fry.



Ransome nips Thax on the elbow, "Ben Gunn-style."

He sees him out with a quote from Ben Gunn.



"When Ben Gunn is wanted, you know where to find him. And him that comes is to have a white thing in his hand and he's to come alone."

As Thax
opens his
shell
game,
Iturbi,
the cop,
arrives.

Lieutenant
Ferris wants to
see you.

Care to try
your luck?



Bill Duff watches from his bally.

Let's go,
asshole.



Lt. Ferris is waiting for Thax at the arcade.



You
remember the
last time we
talked, I
cautioned you
about making our
job harder? I told
you we didn't
like that.

We hate it.

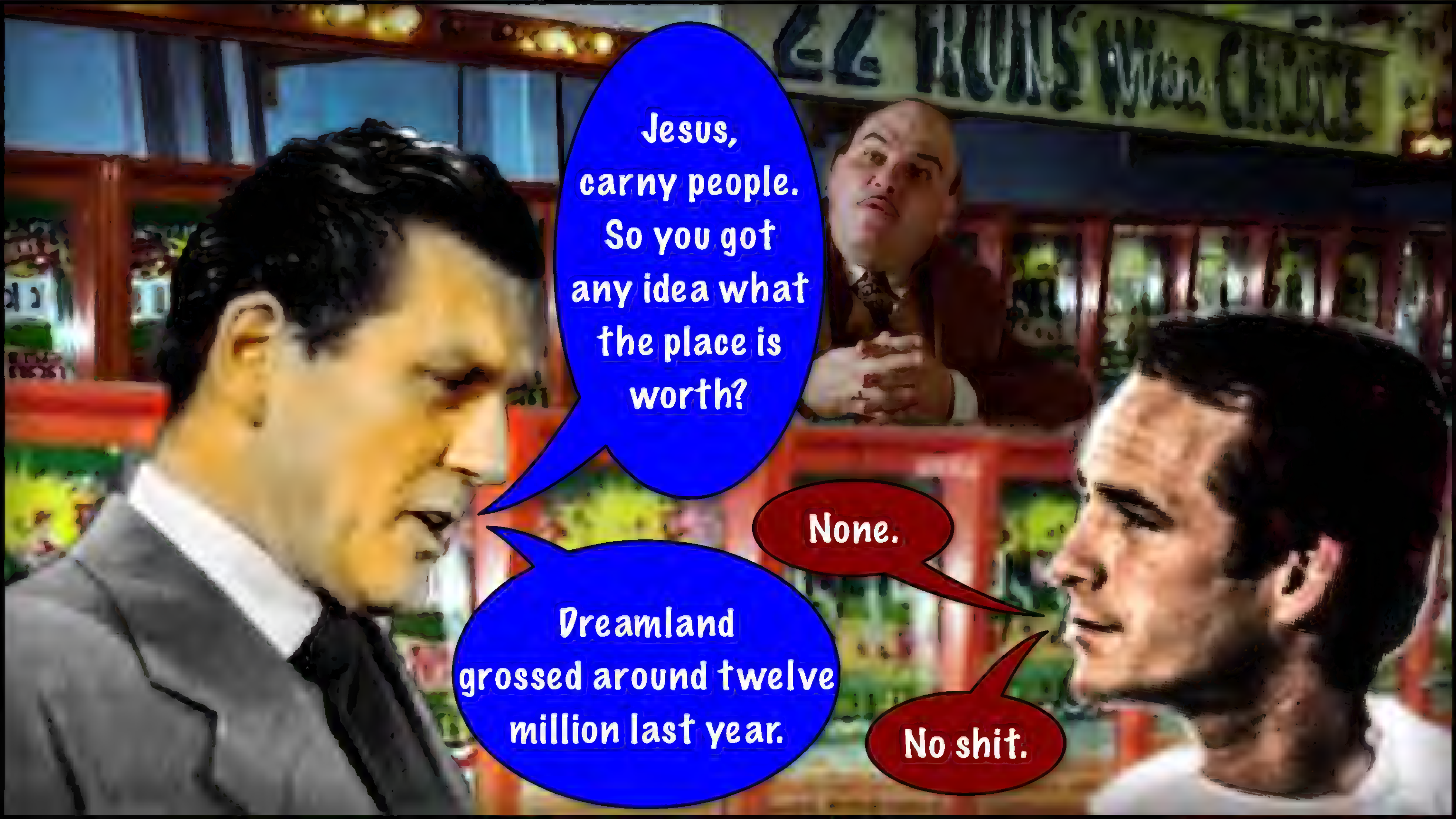
I remember.



Look,
Thaxton, you didn't
tell us that the victim's
wife who stands to inherit
this... theme park, is
your ex-wife.



So?



Jesus,
carny people.
So you got
any idea what
the place is
worth?

None.


Dreamland
grossed around twelve
million last year.

No shit.

A man with dark hair, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and dark tie, is shown from the chest up. He has a serious expression. A large blue speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to his left, containing white text. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a building.

You got anything you might
want to volunteer? Help us
out with the investigation?



A meme featuring two men from the movie 'The Italian Job'. On the left, a man in a grey suit and dark tie looks forward with a serious expression. On the right, a man in a brown suit and dark tie is gesturing with his hands while speaking. Two blue speech bubbles with white text are overlaid on the image. The first speech bubble, pointing to the man on the left, contains the text: 'The point is, I want you to assume I don't and tell me things. Go ahead.' The second speech bubble, pointing to the man on the right, contains the text: 'Yeah, go ahead.'

The point
is, I want you to assume I
don't and tell me things.
Go ahead.

Yeah, go
ahead.




You met with your
ex-wife last night. What did you
two talk about?

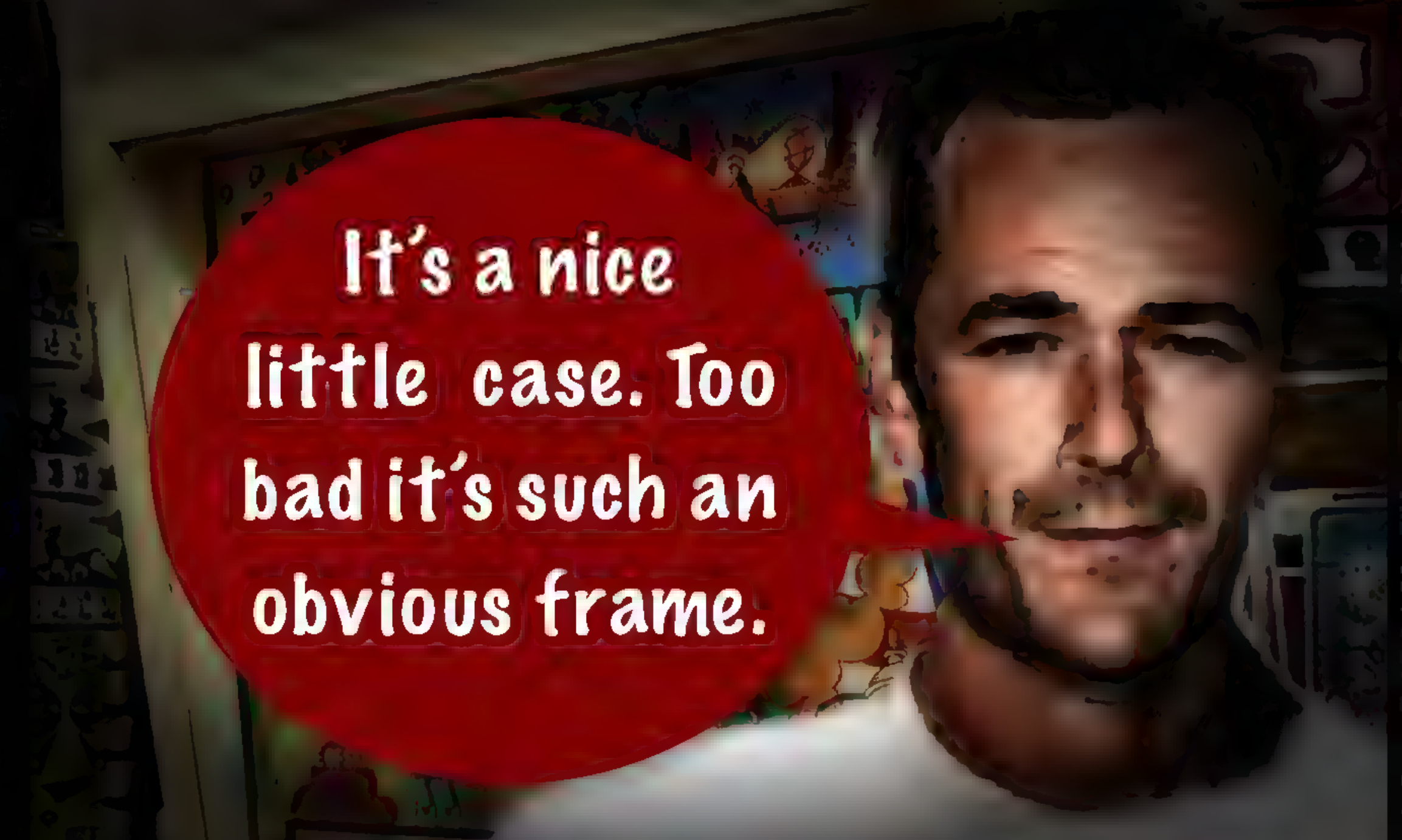
Not much. Said
she didn't hate me
anymore. Said she didn't
give a damn about me
anymore.

She didn't mention
anything to you about you
killing her husband?


No.



The knife
was hers. We found
an earring on the
mudbank by the body.
Hers, also.




It's a nice
little case. Too
bad it's such an
obvious frame.



Funny,
when you think about it.
You show up. Cochrane gives you
a job. You go see his wife and a
few hours later Cochrane
gets killed.



Will you
stop.

A man with dark hair, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and dark tie, is shown from the chest up. He has a serious, questioning expression. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a wooden fence and greenery. A blue speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to the left of his face, containing white text.


One more thing. Your
ex-wife. Did Bill Duff used
to screw her?

A man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white t-shirt, stands in a room filled with pinball machines. He has his arms crossed and is looking slightly to the right. A large, colorful mural is on the wall behind him, featuring a scene with people and the word "JAGGED" at the top. A red speech bubble points to him from the left.

I suspect it was the
other way around.



We heard stuff like that
about her. Was that how it was between
you two when you were married? She do
stuff like that to you?

A still from a movie showing three men on a balcony. In the foreground, two men are shown in profile, facing each other. In the background, a third man stands with his hands clasped, looking towards them. A large red speech bubble originates from the man on the left, and two smaller blue speech bubbles are positioned near the other two men. The background features a balcony railing and a sign that reads "EL RUNS WITH KINGS".

What does this have
to do with the investigation of
Cochrane's murder?

Nothing.

You can go.

Later.

Pardon me sir, are
you Mr. Thaxton?





I am.



Mr. Franks
has been
looking for
you, sir.

For me,
why?

I wouldn't know.
His office is over there,
sir. Upstairs above the
storerooms.

Billie exits
Franks' office
as Thax
enters
downstairs.




A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue t-shirt, is looking out of a window. He has a slightly concerned or questioning expression. A red speech bubble with white text is positioned near his head. The background outside the window is blurred, showing what appears to be a street scene with buildings and possibly a car. The interior walls are a warm, brownish color.

Just
leaving?



Just quit. Gave
my notice. I can't tell
you about it now.

A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace, nearly kissing. The woman has blonde, curly hair and is wearing a dark top. The man has dark hair and is wearing a white shirt. They are both looking at each other with soft expressions. A bright pink speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing text. In the bottom left corner, there is a black box with white text.

I'll tell you
about it tonight.
Can you meet me?

They meet halfway, he
kisses her.

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, appearing to be in the back of a car. The man, on the left, has short dark hair and is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. The woman, on the right, has blonde hair and is wearing a dark top. They are both looking towards the camera. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image. The first speech bubble is red and contains the text 'Tell me now.' The second speech bubble is pink and contains the text 'Wait for me behind the kootch show. Tonight.'

Tell me now.

Wait for me
behind the kootch
show. Tonight.

Franks pokes
his head out
the door at
the top of
stairs.



Thaxton...

OFFICE

Billie's high heels go click-clack down the stairs
and out the door.



Franks pours Thax a drink.

Mr. Thaxton, I'm
sorry if I seemed abrupt
when we met.

I had a lot on my
mind, what with Mr.
Cochrane's death.



A man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white t-shirt, is holding a glass of amber liquid (likely whiskey) in his right hand. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background features a wooden door and a calendar. The calendar shows the month of November, with dates 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 19, and 26 visible. A dark, rectangular object is placed on the calendar.

Is that to your liking?

Fine.

He Picks up the phone and dials.

A man with glasses and a suit is sitting at a desk. He is holding a bottle of Jack Daniel's in his right hand. A green speech bubble is next to him.

I don't drink
myself.

A man in a white t-shirt is holding a glass of whiskey. A red speech bubble is next to him.

Of course.

A man with short brown hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, is holding a black rotary telephone receiver to his ear. He is wearing thick-rimmed glasses and has a slight smile. The background is a wall with a grid of small, dark, circular perforations. A green speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to the left of his face, containing the text "Hello, May?".

Hello, May?



RUSSELL COMPANY

NOVEMBER

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10
11	12
13	14
15	16
17	18
19	20
21	22
23	24
25	26
27	28
29	30

May enters
Franks' office.


JACK DANIEL'S

OLD NO. 7
Tennessee
Whiskey

She
wobbles
over to
the
couch, a
little bit
drunk.

This is serious,
Thax. Everybody thinks
I murdered Rob. It's all
over the lot.





Every last
bastard out there
who takes my money
is saying it.





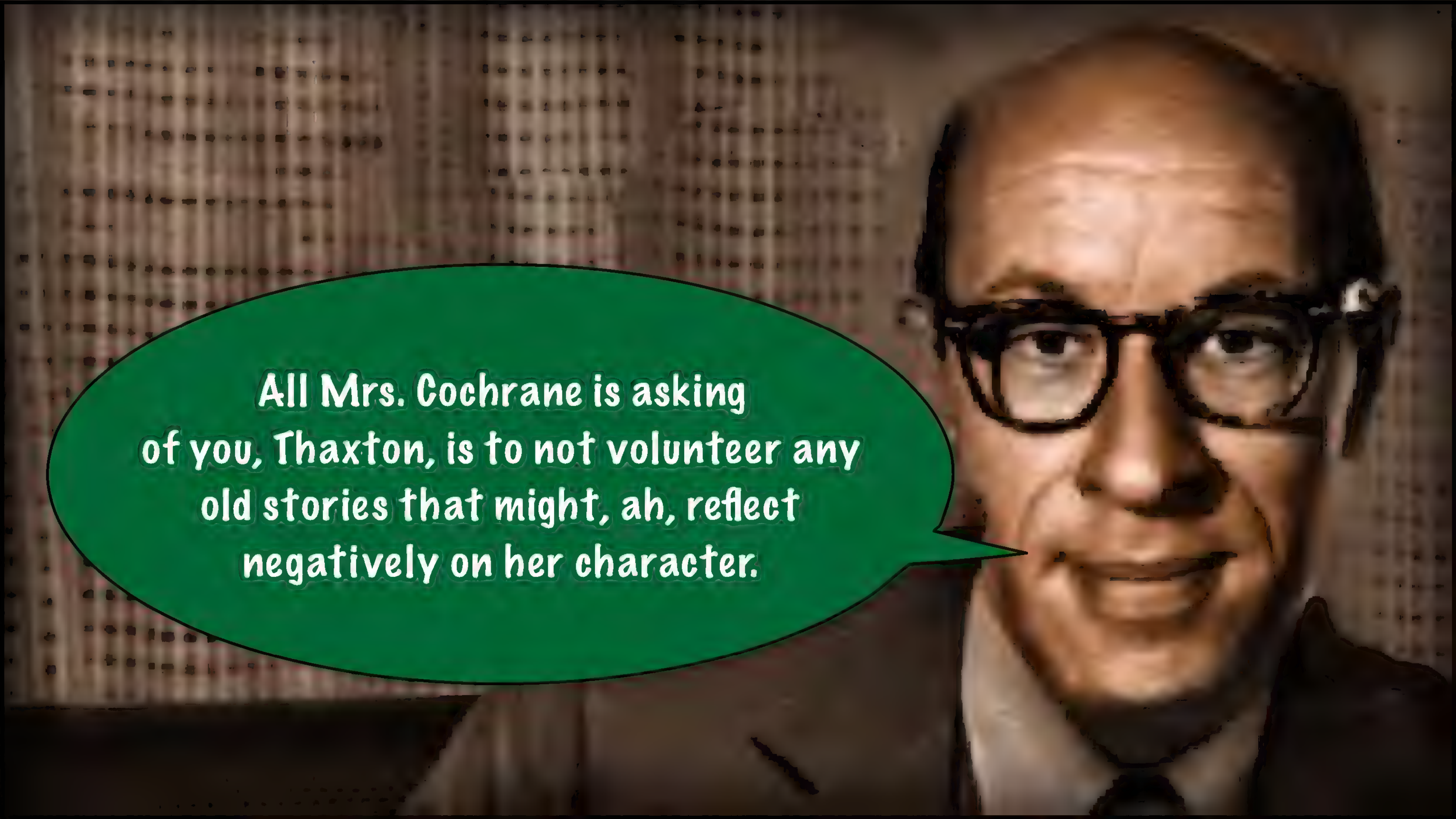
Rob gave me everything.
All I have now is grief.

My knife, my earring, my
husband. I'm as good as convicted.



May... now May.



A close-up portrait of a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, wearing dark-rimmed glasses, a white shirt, and a dark tie. He is smiling slightly. A large green speech bubble with a black outline is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping his face and the background. The background is a textured, brownish-grey surface.

All Mrs. Cochrane is asking
of you, Thaxton, is to not volunteer any
old stories that might, ah, reflect
negatively on her character.


Thax turns to May.

Like
that time you poked me in the
spleen with a throwing knife.
Stuff like that?

Just don't
add to my
problems,
Thax.

Whatever you
want... you can have.



A man with dark hair and a mustache is shown in profile on the left, looking towards a woman on the right. The woman has long dark hair and is wearing a black top. A large red speech bubble with a black outline is positioned between them, containing white text. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a wall with a calendar or poster that has the numbers 27, 28, 29, and 30 visible at the top.

All I want is the
money I earn on the lot. The police
don't know about that time you stabbed
me. Unless something goes wrong,
I'll never mention it.



I'll see you two lovely people later.

Thax exits.

A ghostly fog hangs over the midway.

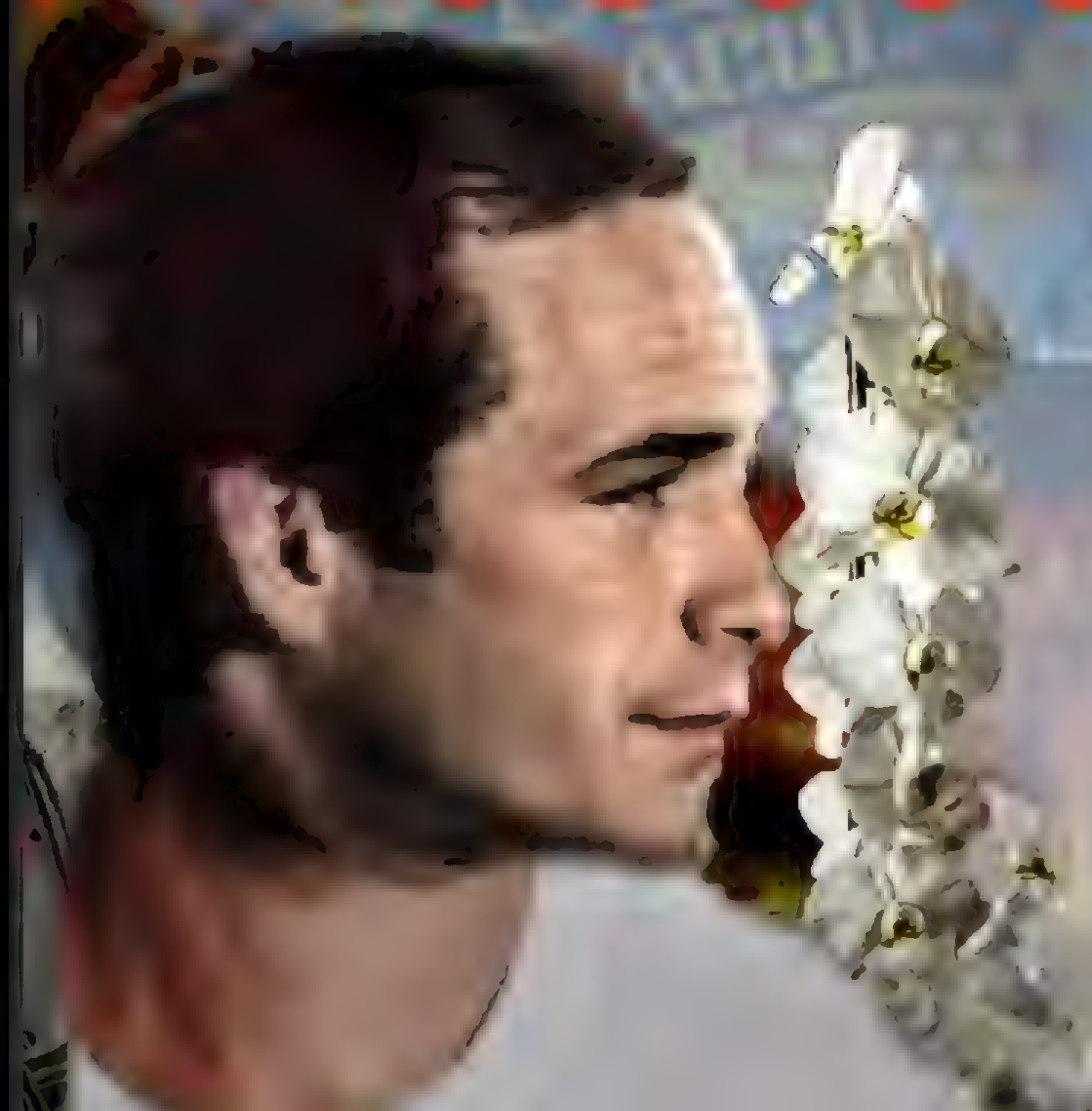


Some young girls drift
by, looking magically
beautiful in the mist.



The distant sound of the
Viking horn. Closing time.

Hhooooo-oooooh



PLACE OF ILLUSION

WORLD'S
STRANGEST
PEOPLE



Thax closes up and walks over to Gabby's joint.



He enters through the tent flap.



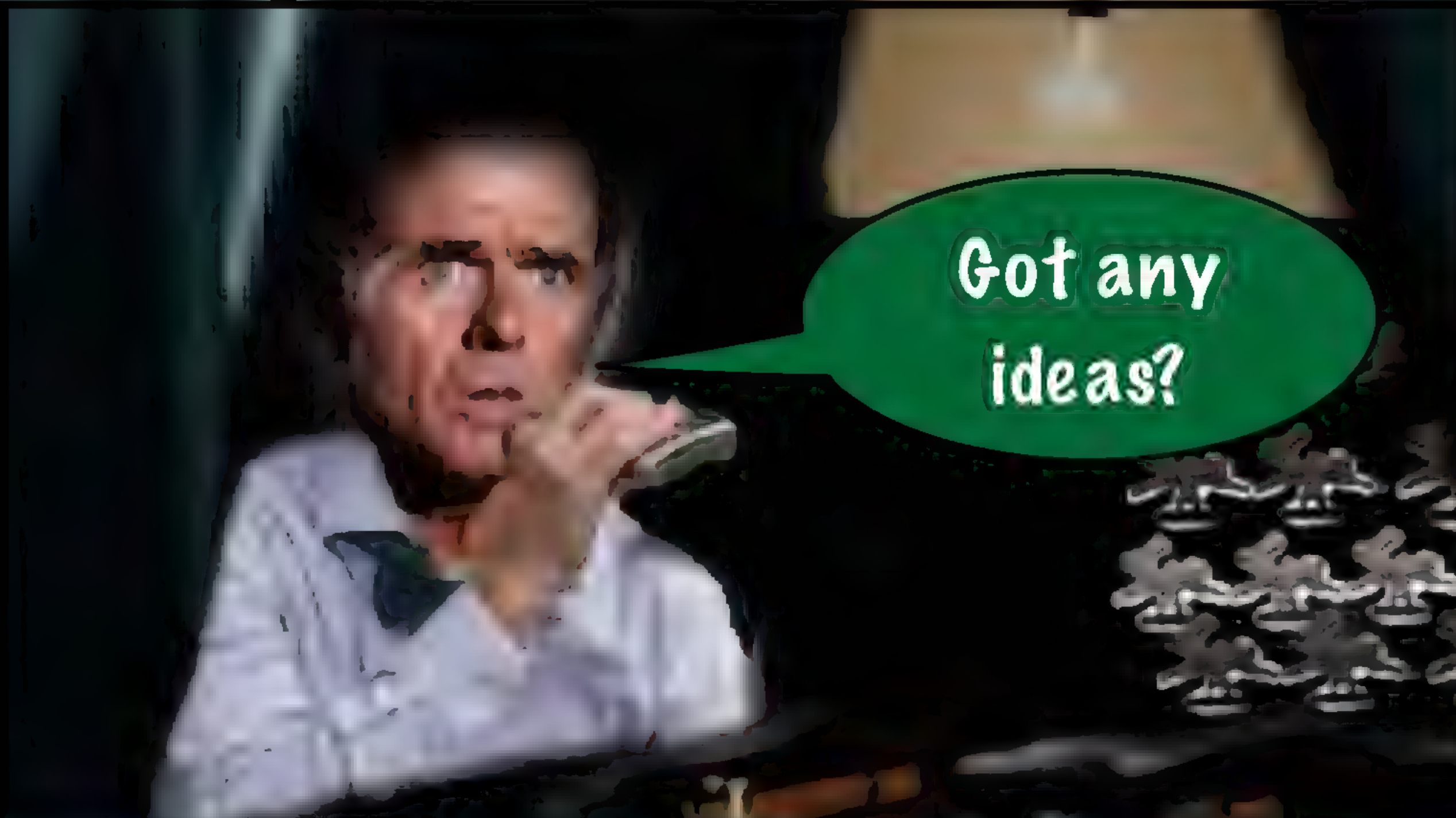
Gabby offers Thax a drink.

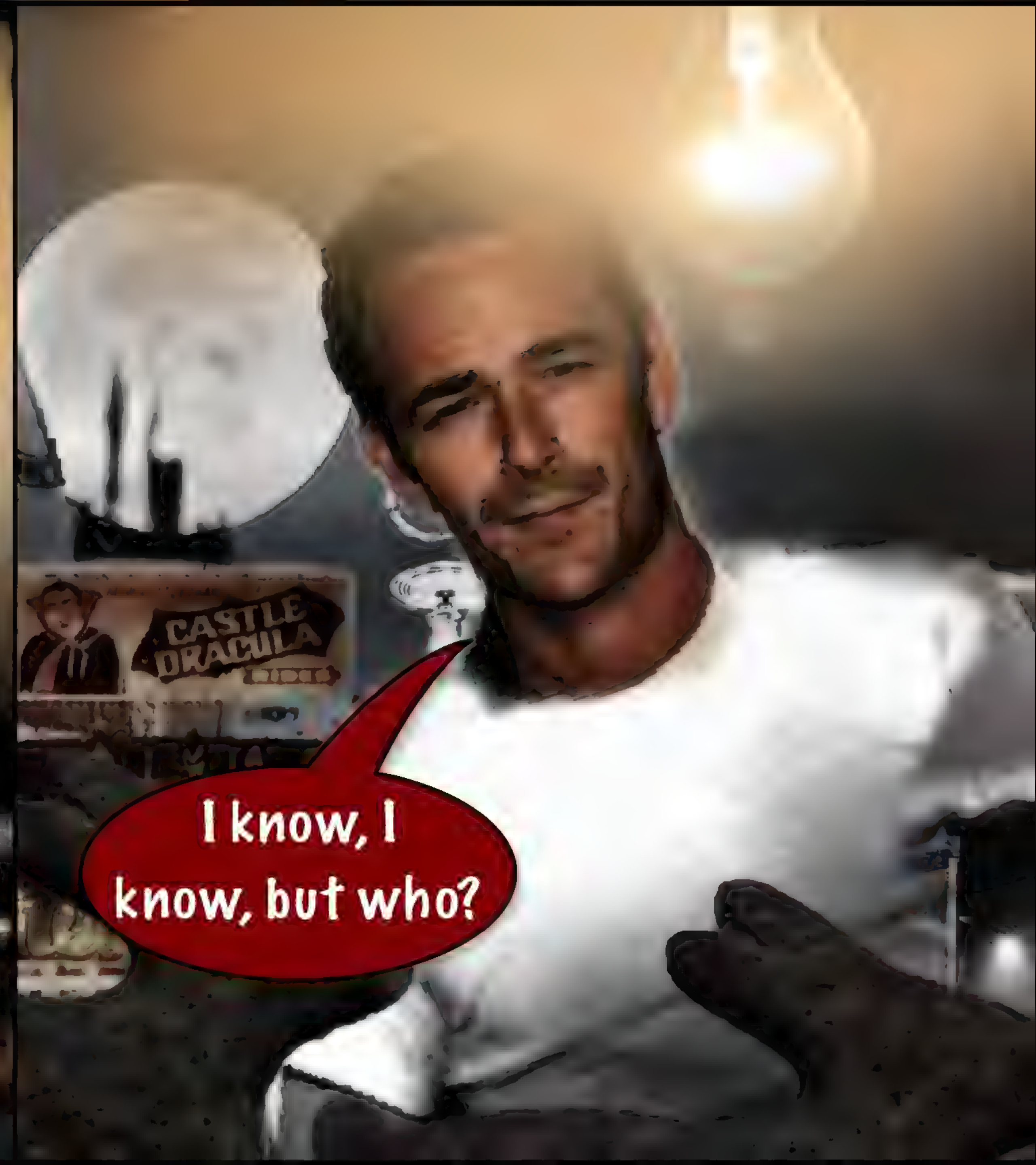
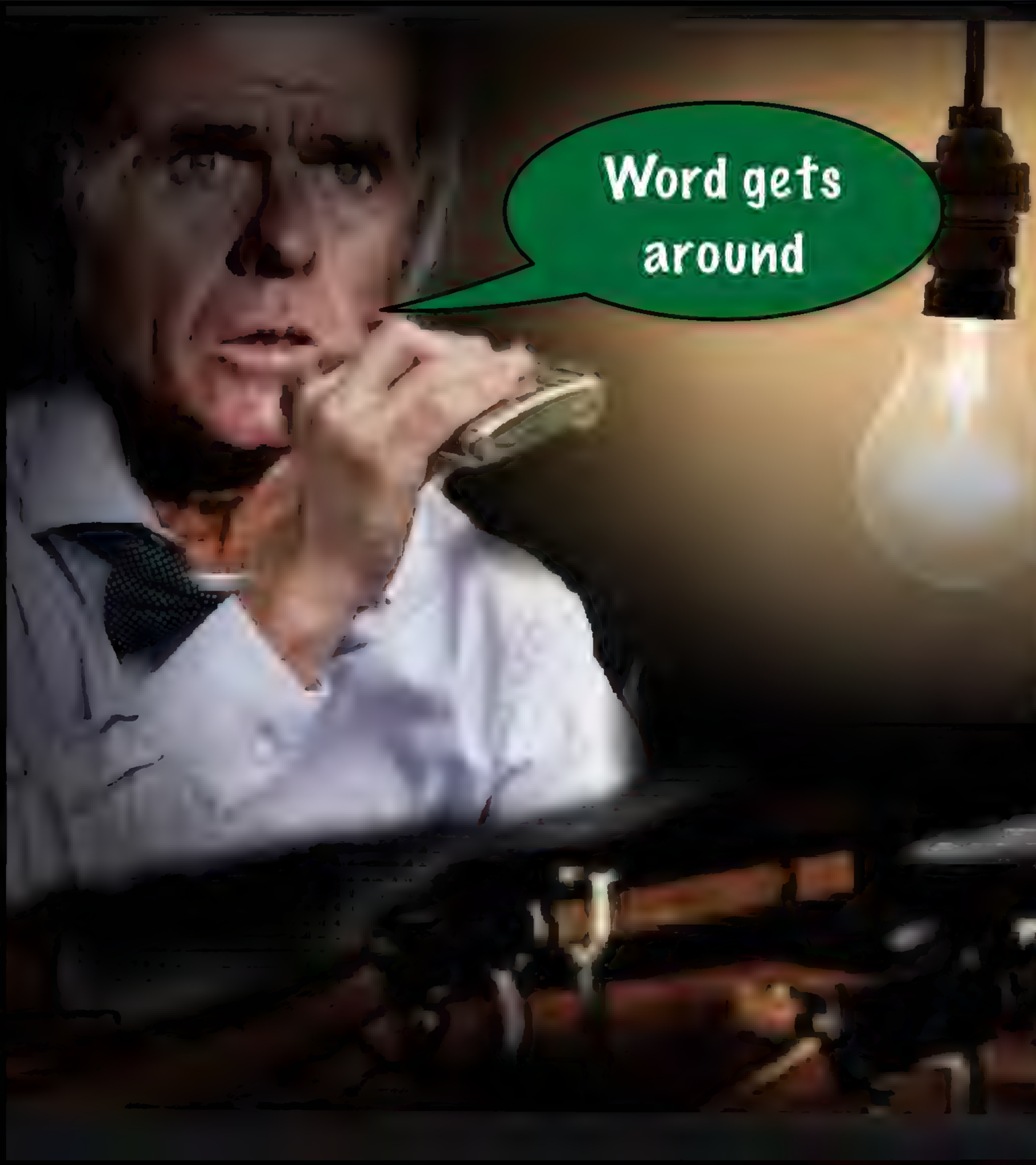


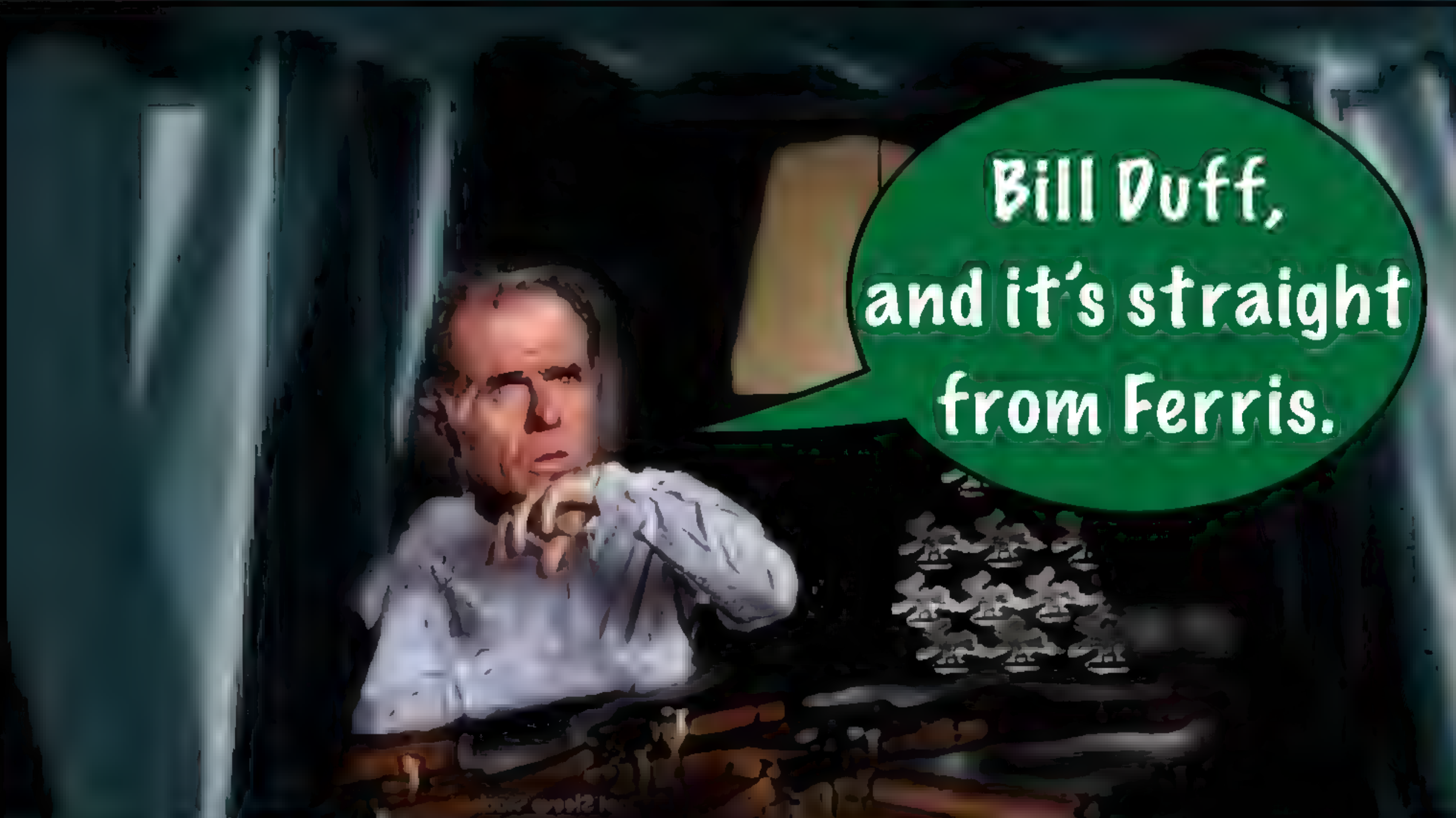
He takes a pull and passes it back to Gabby.



Gabby takes a long drink and wipes his mouth.



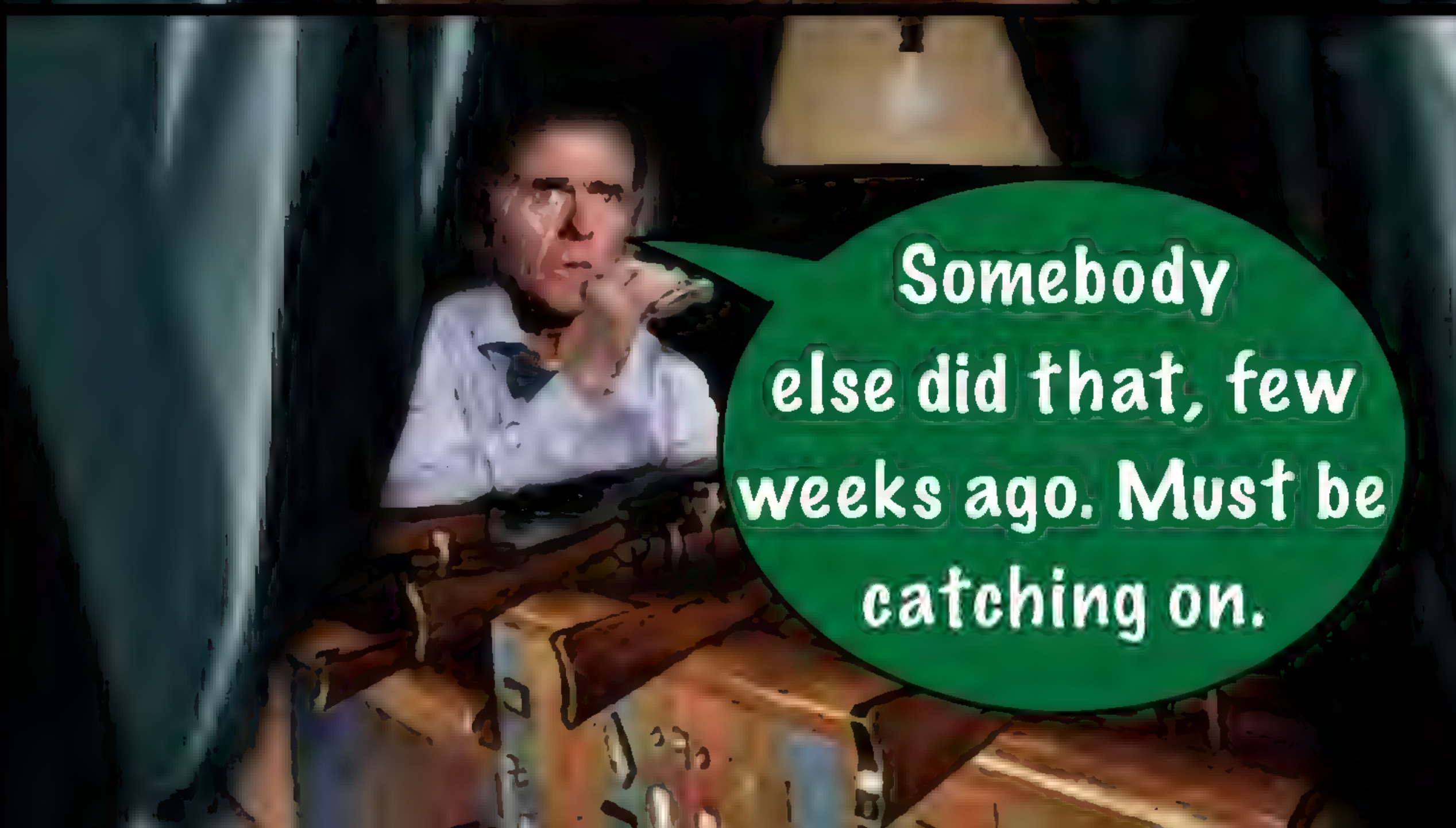




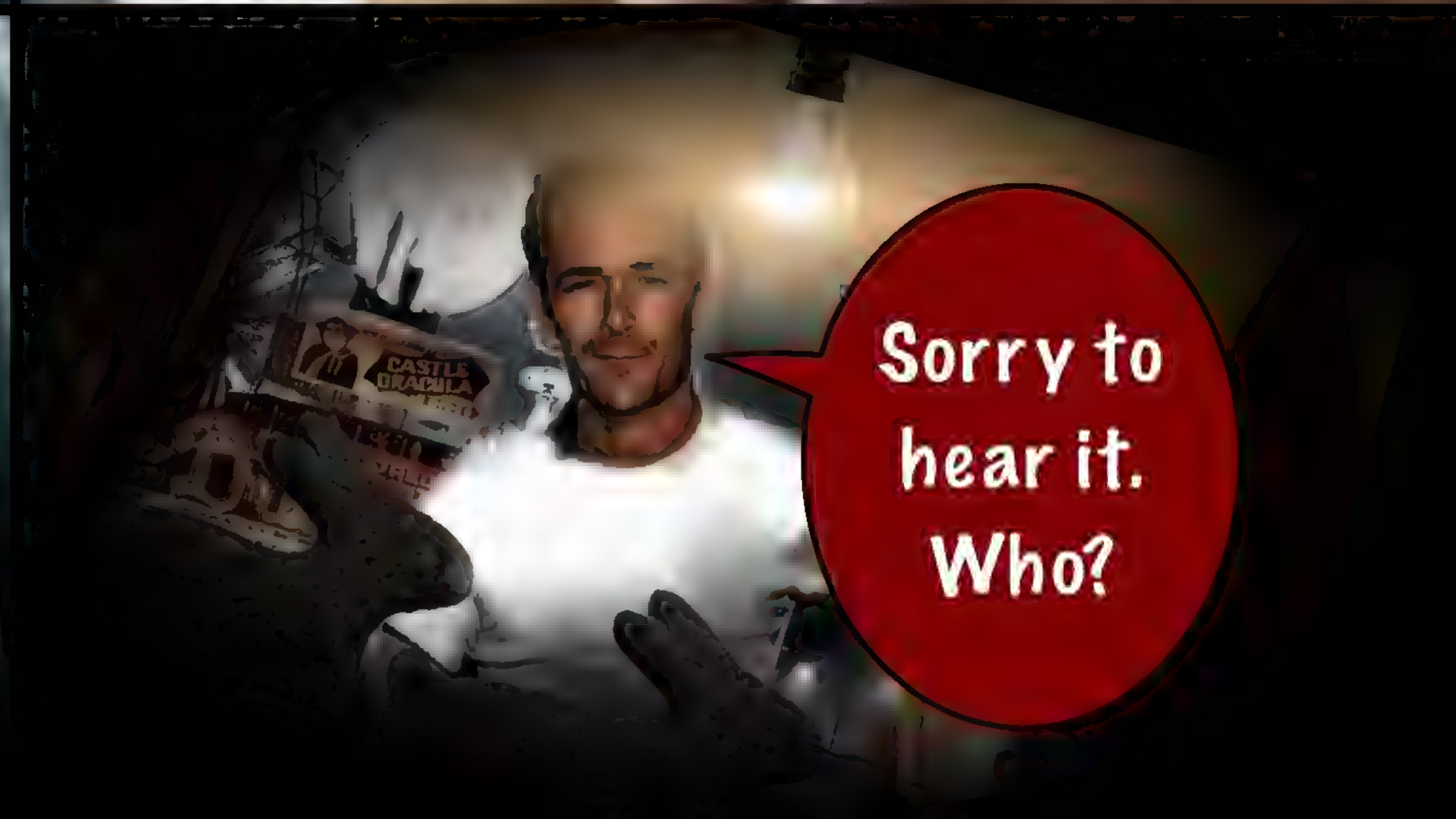
Bill Duff,
and it's straight
from Ferris.



I may have to
punch old Bill in
the mouth again.
I hate to do it.



Somebody
else did that, few
weeks ago. Must be
catching on.



Sorry to
hear it.
Who?



Mike Ransome, over
at the card game. Duff started
to tell a dirty story about him
and May Cochrane.

Nobody wanted to
hear it on account of Rob, but
Duff wouldn't shut up. So Mike
put a fist in his pie-hole.

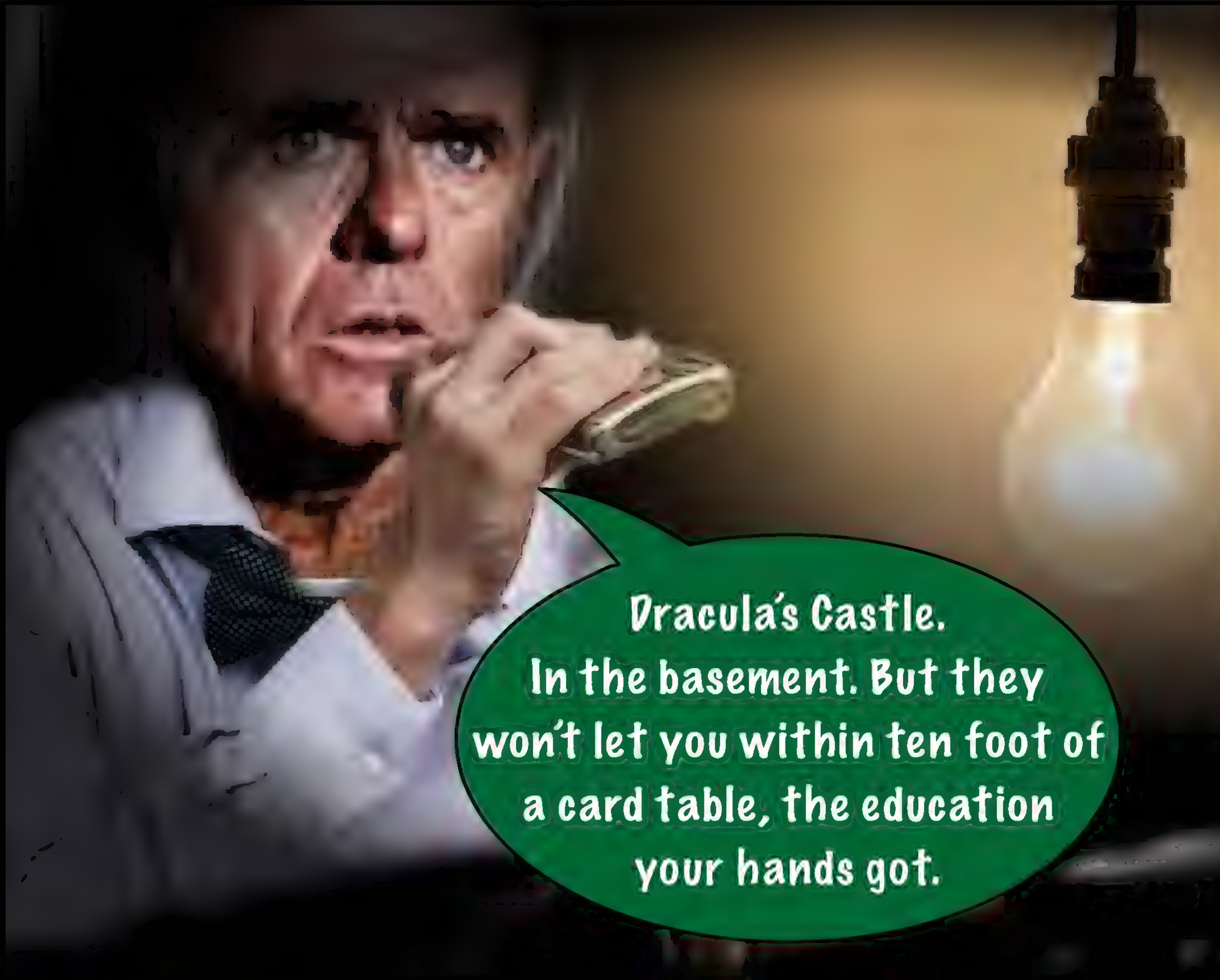


You should
see him in
action. He's
fast.

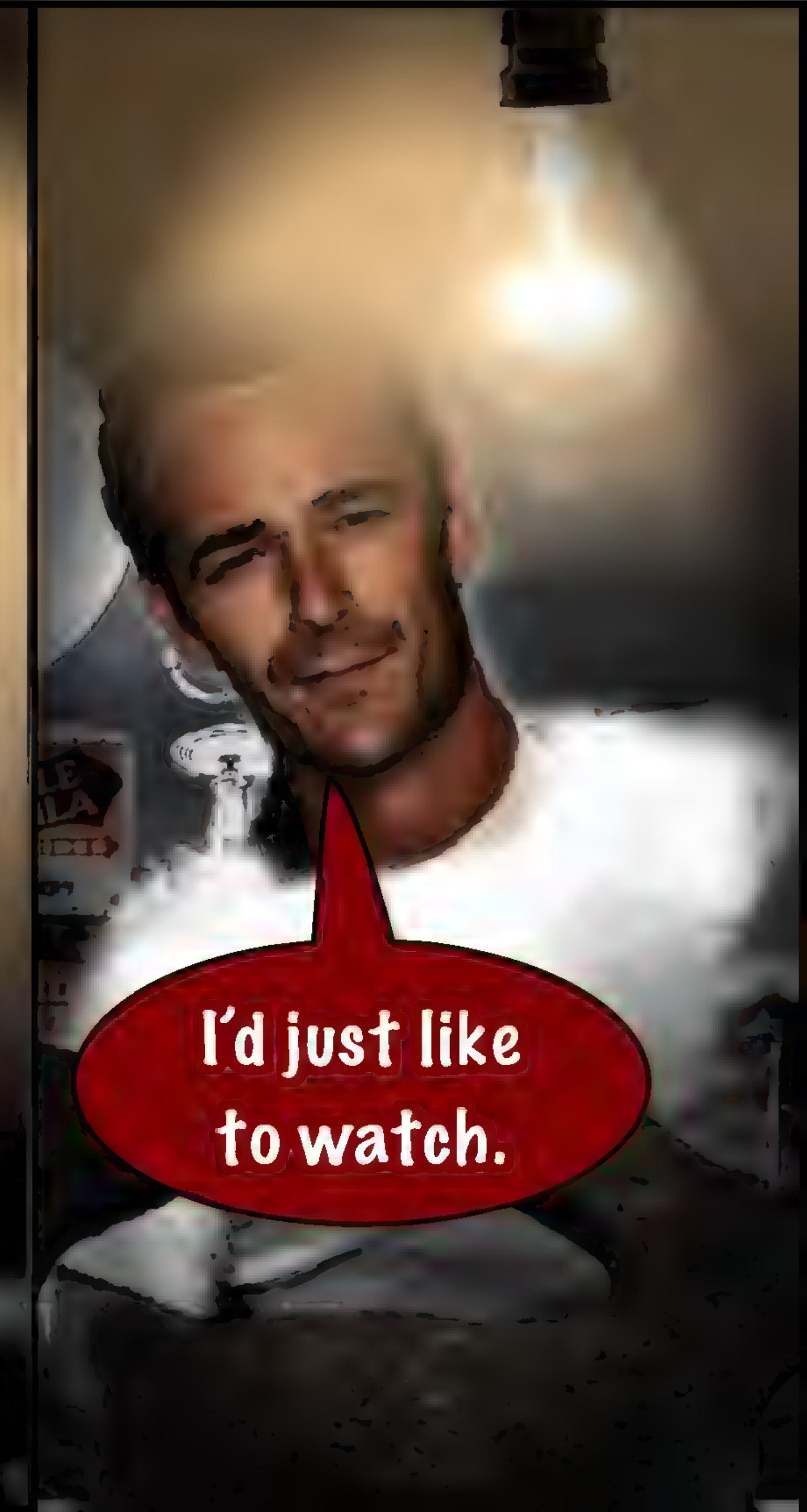


Huh. I
wouldn't have
thought he was
the type.

Where is
this card game?
I'd like to peek in
sometime.



Dracula's Castle.
In the basement. But they
won't let you within ten foot of
a card table, the education
your hands got.



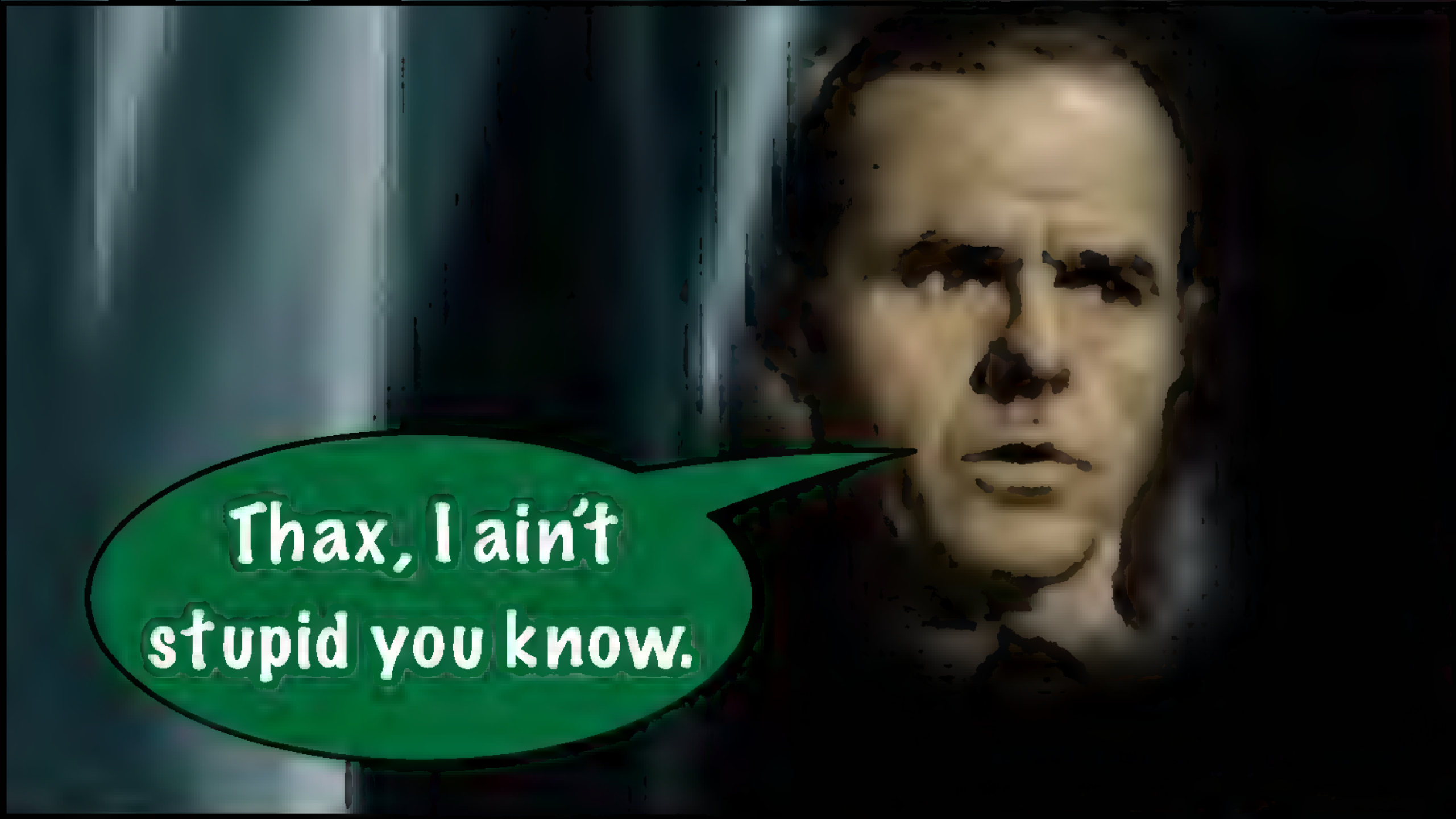
I'd just like
to watch.

Thax turns to leave.




Gabby blocks him.

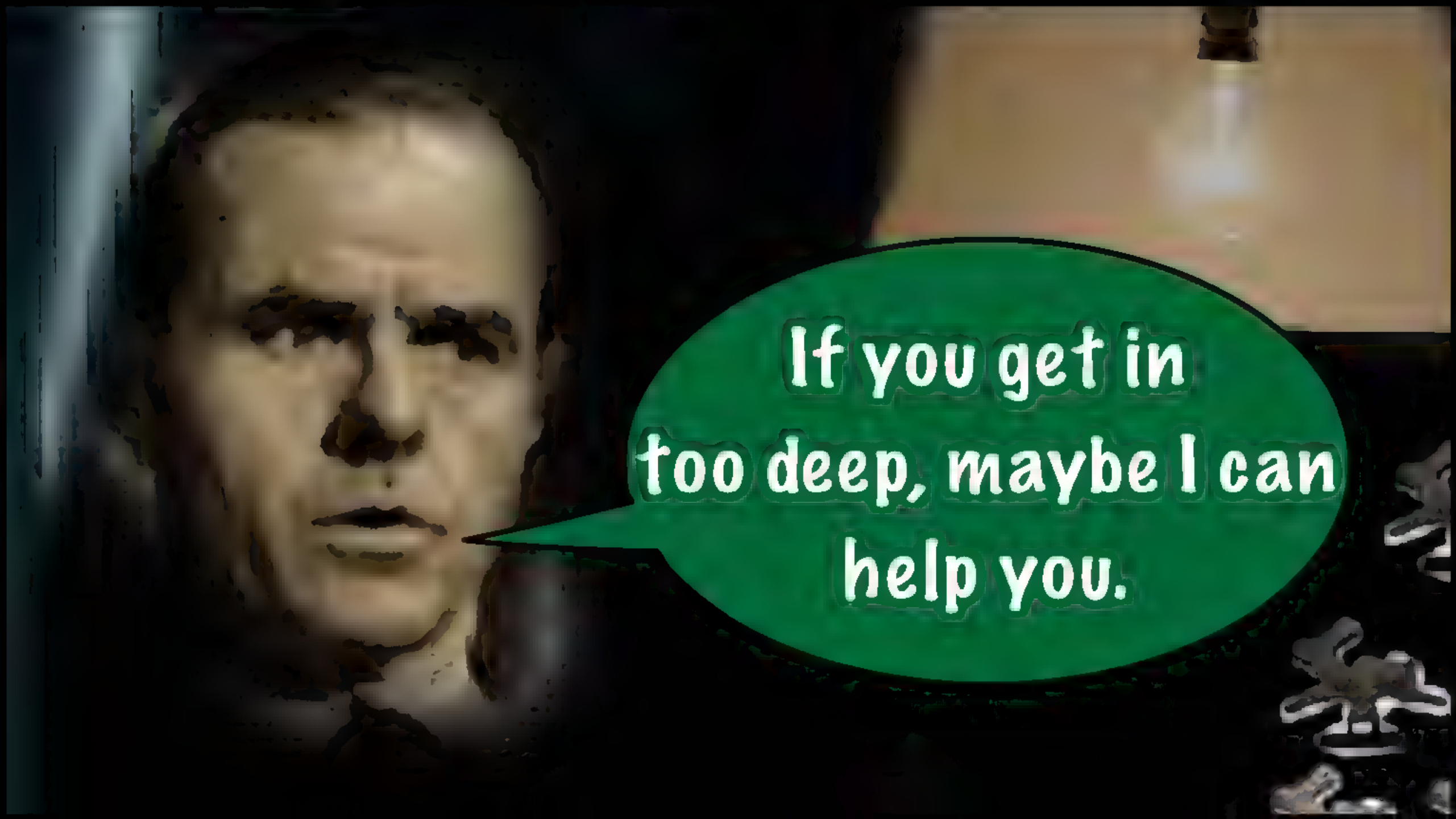


A close-up shot of a man with short, dark hair and a serious, somewhat stern expression. He is looking directly at the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Thax, I ain't
stupid you know.**

A close-up shot of a man with short, light-colored hair and a slight, knowing smile. He is looking towards the camera. The background is bright and out of focus.

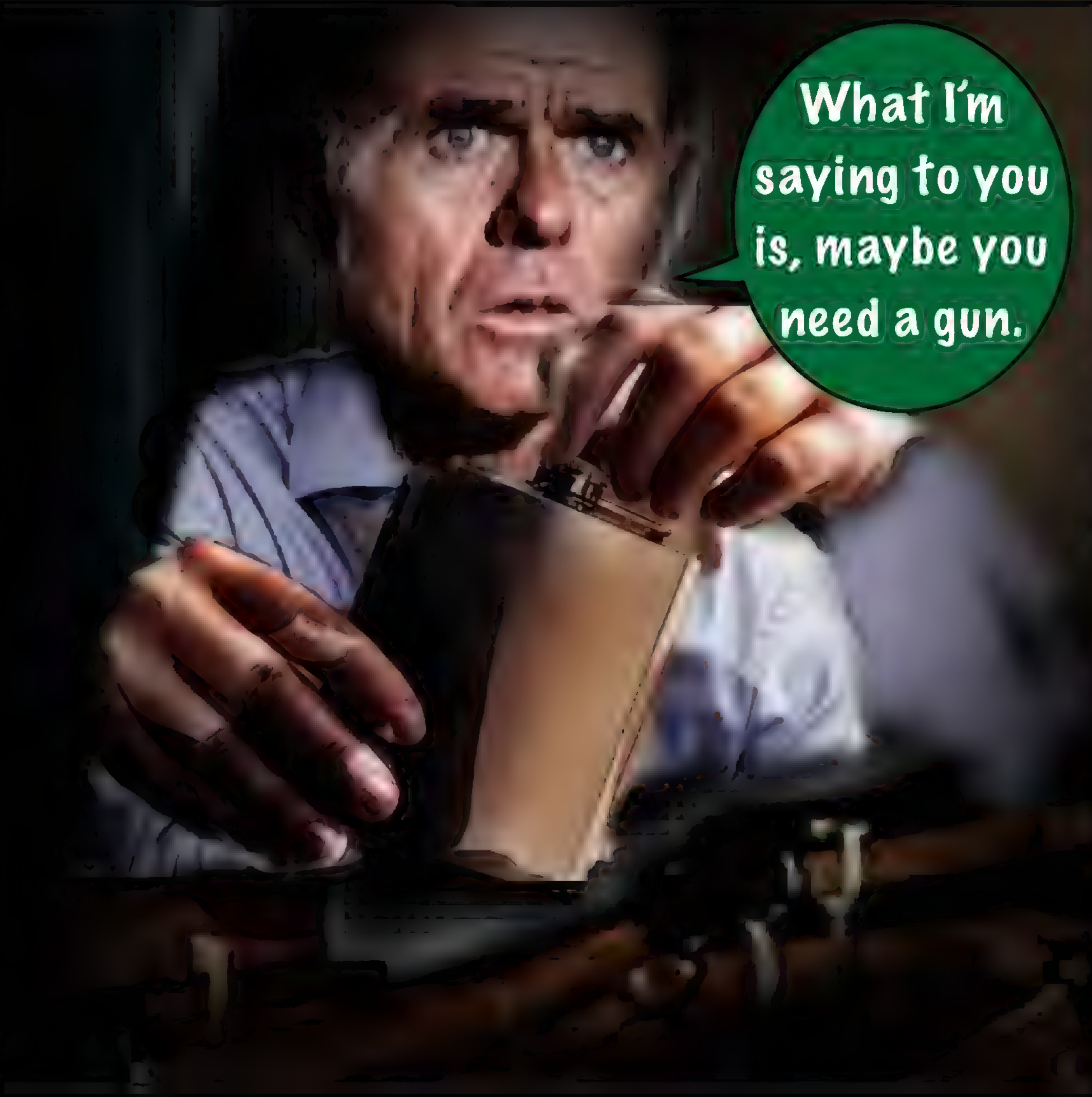
**What are you
talking about?**

A close-up shot of the same man from the first panel, with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

**If you get in
too deep, maybe I can
help you.**

A medium shot of the man from the second panel, wearing a white t-shirt. He is sitting at a table, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is bright and out of focus.

Speak English.

A man with a worried expression, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, is holding a cardboard box. He is looking directly at the camera with a concerned expression. A green speech bubble is positioned above his head.

What I'm
saying to you
is, maybe you
need a gun.

A man with a slight smile, wearing a white t-shirt and black gloves, is gesturing with his hands. A red speech bubble is positioned above his head. In the background, there is a poster for 'Castle Dracula' and a glowing light bulb.

Thanks
Gabby.

Jerry
entertains
Bev, one of
the kootch
girls,
behind the
Palace of
Illusions.



He walks a quarter up and down his knuckles.



Thax
arrives.

Show Bev how a real pro works,
Thax. Let's see you take her panties.

Is she wearing any?



See, he's good, Bev,
he knew right away.

Jerry, stop being
such a sleaze. You're
embarrassing me.



As Thax whispers in her ear, he slips the earring from her other ear.

Bev emits a little shriek of delight when he gives it back to her.



Billie steps out of the shadows.

Why don't you and Jerry go take
a swim in the Swamp Ride, sugar?



A scene from a movie featuring three characters. On the left, a police officer in a blue uniform and cap is looking towards the center. In the center, a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a light-colored, open cardigan over a dark top, is looking towards the right. On the right, a man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is looking towards the woman. A green speech bubble with white text is positioned above the woman's head.

Time to stroll,
doll.

Billie takes Thax's arm.

Where we going?

C'mon. I'll
show you.

The last marks file out and
disappear into the mist.



Billie and Thax arrive at Dracula's Castle.



The Count's
castle's not open
until next month.

Billie leads him up a corkscrew staircase.





No lights
up here yet.



She leads him to the bed.

They lie down together.


Thax, you
used to have
money, right?

Who told
you that?

A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace. The man, with short dark hair and a slight beard, is looking down at the woman with a gentle smile. The woman, with blonde hair, is looking up at him. The background is dark and out of focus. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a pink one on the left and a red one on the right.

It's what people say.

I guess I did,
til May cleaned
me out.

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, sitting in the front of a car. The woman is on the left, looking towards the man on the right. The man is smiling and looking at the camera. The background is a blurred view of a city street. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a pink one for the woman and a red one for the man.


**You know how
to handle money,
don't you?**

**If I was all that
good at it I'd probably
still have some left.**

A man with short brown hair and a light beard is lying in bed, propped up on his left arm. He is wearing a light blue t-shirt and looking towards a small, fluffy white dog with a yellow patch on its face. The dog is sitting on the bed, looking back at the man. The background is a dark, textured wall. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a pink one on the left and a red one on the right.

Let's go away.
We could go to the
Mediterranean. I've
always wanted to
go there.

Are you nuts?

A still from the movie 'The Wolf of Wall Street' showing Leonardo DiCaprio as Jordan Belfort and Margot Robbie as Naomi. They are in a room with a large window in the background. DiCaprio is leaning over Robbie, who is looking up at him. Both have speech bubbles overlaid on the image.

I've got money.
Enough for both of us. You
can manage it. You know,
invest it in something.

It's time
to move on. I want
this part of my life
to be over.

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is looking down at a woman with short blonde hair. The woman is looking up at him. The background is blurred, showing other people in a social setting.

Where'd you
get this money?

A close-up of a woman with short blonde hair, looking up and to the right. She has a slight smile. The background is blurred, showing other people in a social setting.

Saved it.
I'm a
thrifty
girl.



Let's
talk about
it later.

Thax? Two
weeks. Are
you coming
with me?



Oh yeah. I'm coming with you.

Later, Thax walks Billie
out to the parking lot.





The two guards from the swamp ride
pull up and shine a spotlight on them.

What's
going on here?

A prison riot.





It's Thaxton.

I remember you.

A photograph of a police officer and a man in a blue jacket. The officer is on the left, wearing a light blue uniform with a yellow badge. The man is on the right, wearing a blue jacket and a grey cap. There are two blue speech bubbles with white text. The background is dark and blurry, with a car's headlight visible on the left.

He's got a
problem.

Put his name
in the log.

Two
weeks, Thax. Then the
Mediterranean.



Billie speeds away.

Hey!





She drives off into the fog.




Thax arrives at
the security
shack.

Hi. I'm Thaxton. I work
the shell game.

Listen, you got a spare
flashlight you could loan me? I, uh,
lost my wallet.

100 MILE
HOUR
DAYBOY

WARRIOR
ACTION 5-4
1003

A scene from the television series Star Trek: Voyager. On the left, Neelix is shown from the chest up, looking towards the right. In the center, a hand is holding a small, white, cylindrical object with a black top. On the right, Kes is shown from the chest up, looking towards the left. The background is a blurred view of the ship's interior. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image: a large blue one at the top and a smaller red one in the middle.

Sure, here, take mine. It's a good one, make sure you bring it back. You know how it works?

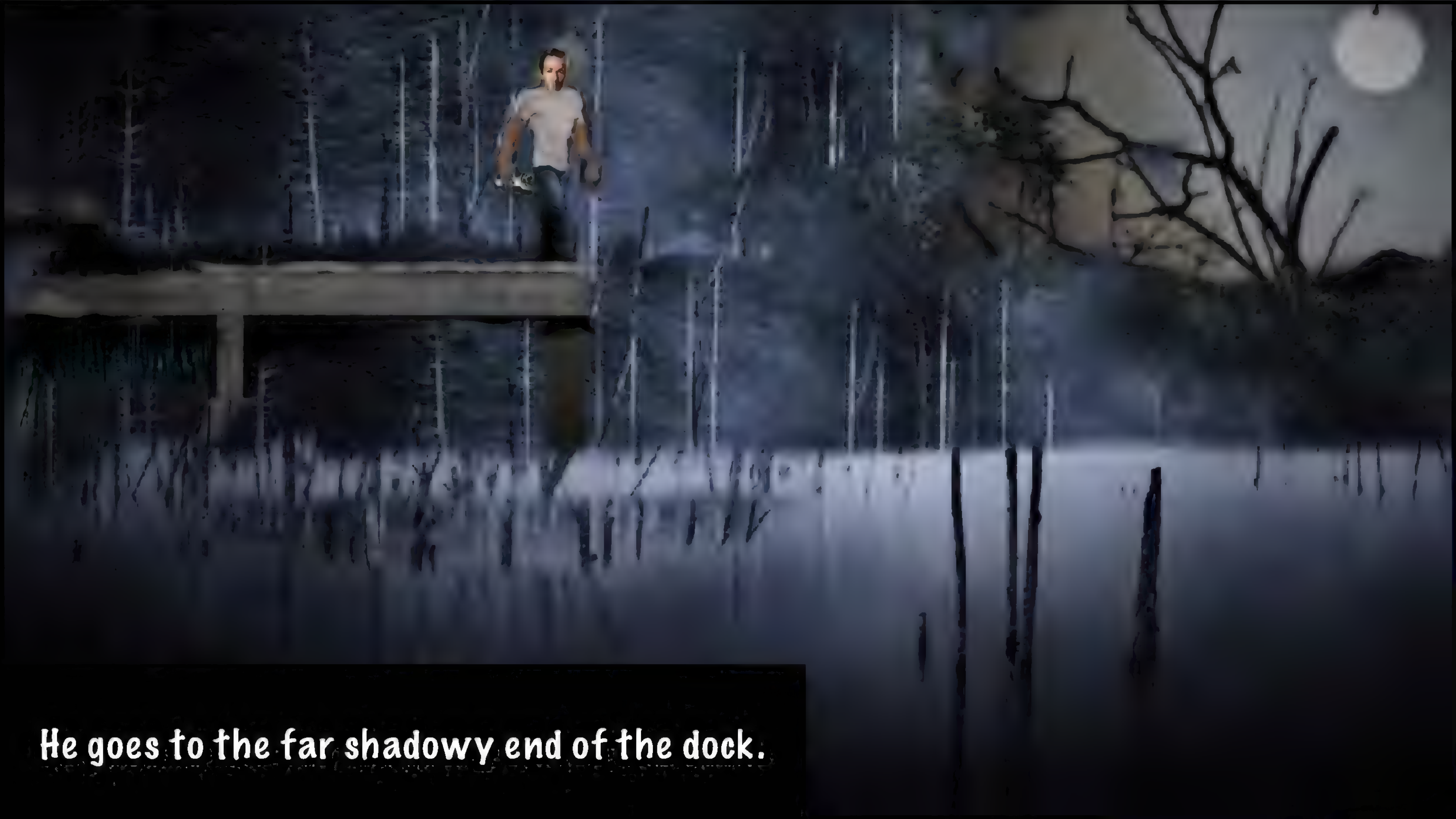
I'll figure it out.



Thax studies a
large map of
Dreamland.

The flashlight
beam
illuminates a
detail of the
Swamp Ride.





He goes to the far shadowy end of the dock.



Fog creeps over the water. A gator swims by.

He turns on the flashlight and
steps into the water.



Thax looks for the spot where he found Cochrane's body.





He turns, and the light beam finds...

Bill Duff.



Turn that
damn thing off. You
trying to blind me?


A close-up photograph of a man with a mustache and short brown hair, looking intently at a knife. The knife is held in a white-gloved hand, with the blade pointing towards the man. The background is dark and out of focus.

Let's see
the other
hand first, Bill.
I'd hate to
discover one of
May's knives
in it.

Duff shows his hand. In it
is a small flashlight.




Ha-ha

A close-up photograph of a man with a mustache and short brown hair, wearing a light blue shirt. He is looking slightly to his right with a neutral expression.

What are you
doing way out here, Bill,
returning to the scene of
the crime?

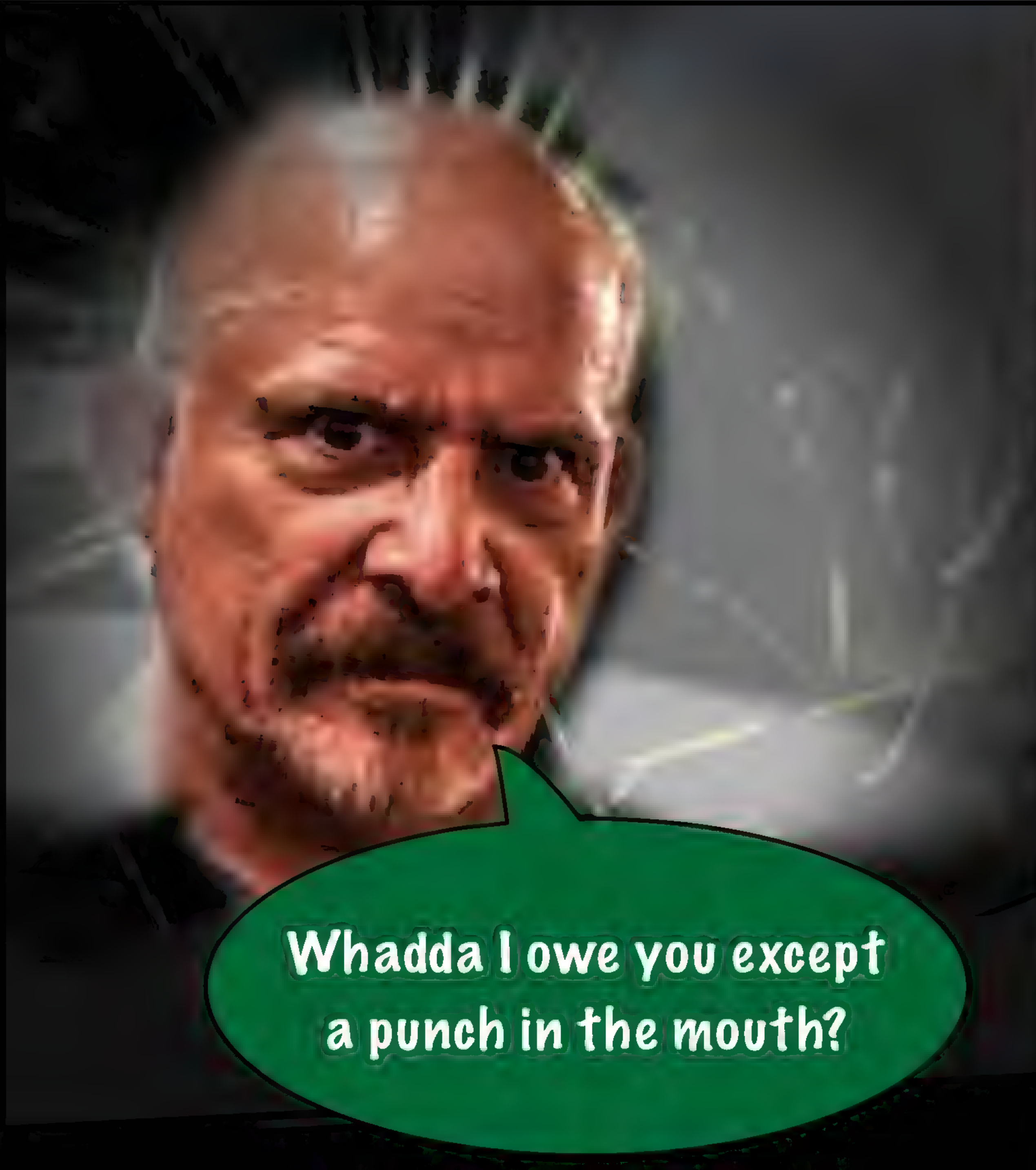
A close-up photograph of the same man, looking directly at the camera. He has a slight smile and his head is tilted back slightly.

Just like you,
Thax. You said
stuff to the cops
about me, stuff
could damage my
reputation.

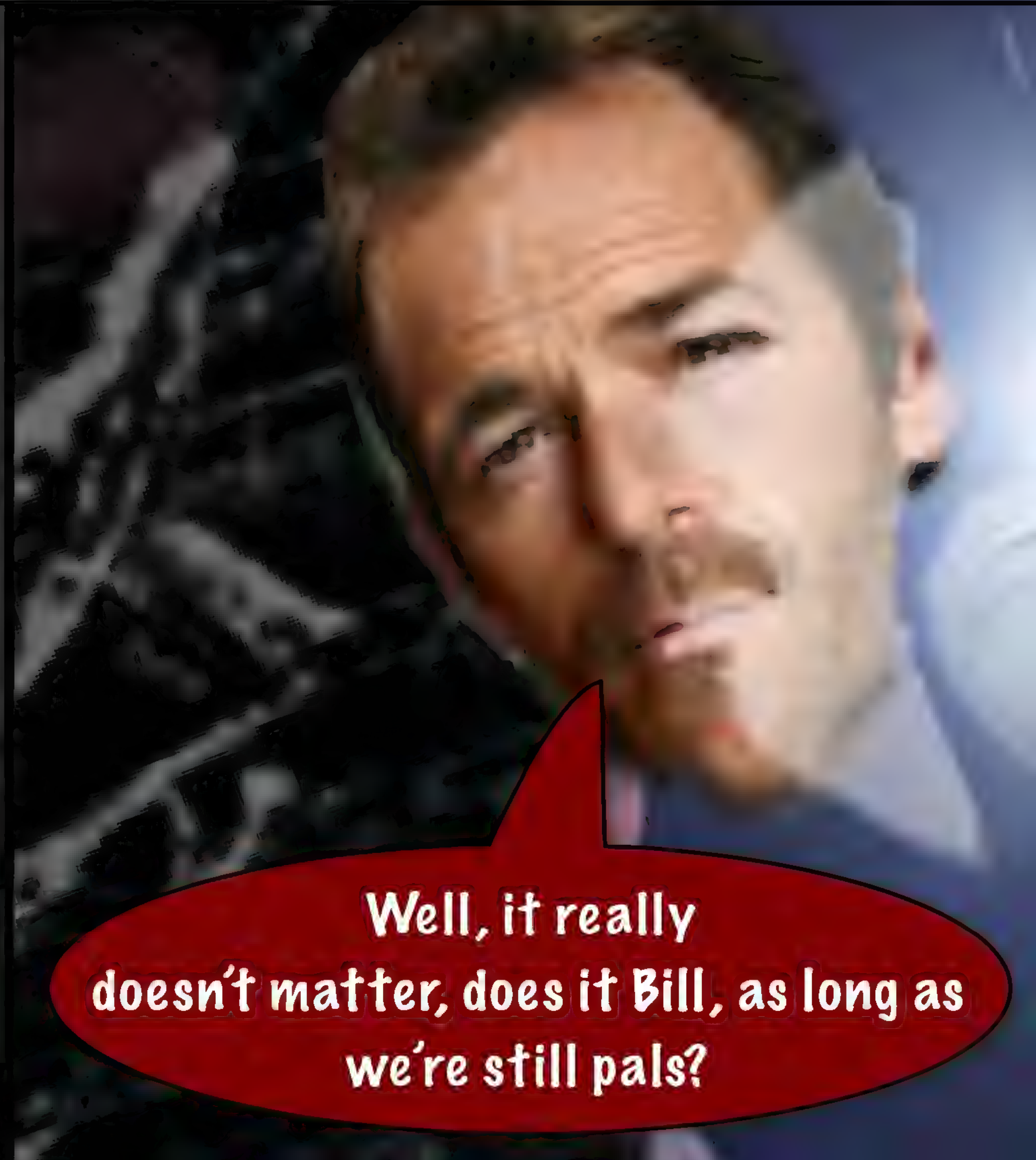
A man with a beard and a blue shirt is looking at a toilet. He has a serious expression. The background is a plain wall.

**You can't
damage a turd.**


**Besides, you
told the cops a few things
about me, too.**



Whadda I owe you except
a punch in the mouth?



Well, it really
doesn't matter, does it Bill, as long as
we're still pals?

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is captured in the middle of a golf swing. He is looking towards the camera with a determined expression. A green speech bubble is positioned near his face. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a golf course or a similar outdoor setting.

That's
right, 'long as we
stay even.

Duff swings hard.

His fist SMASHES Thax's face.



The flashlight
drops into the
water.

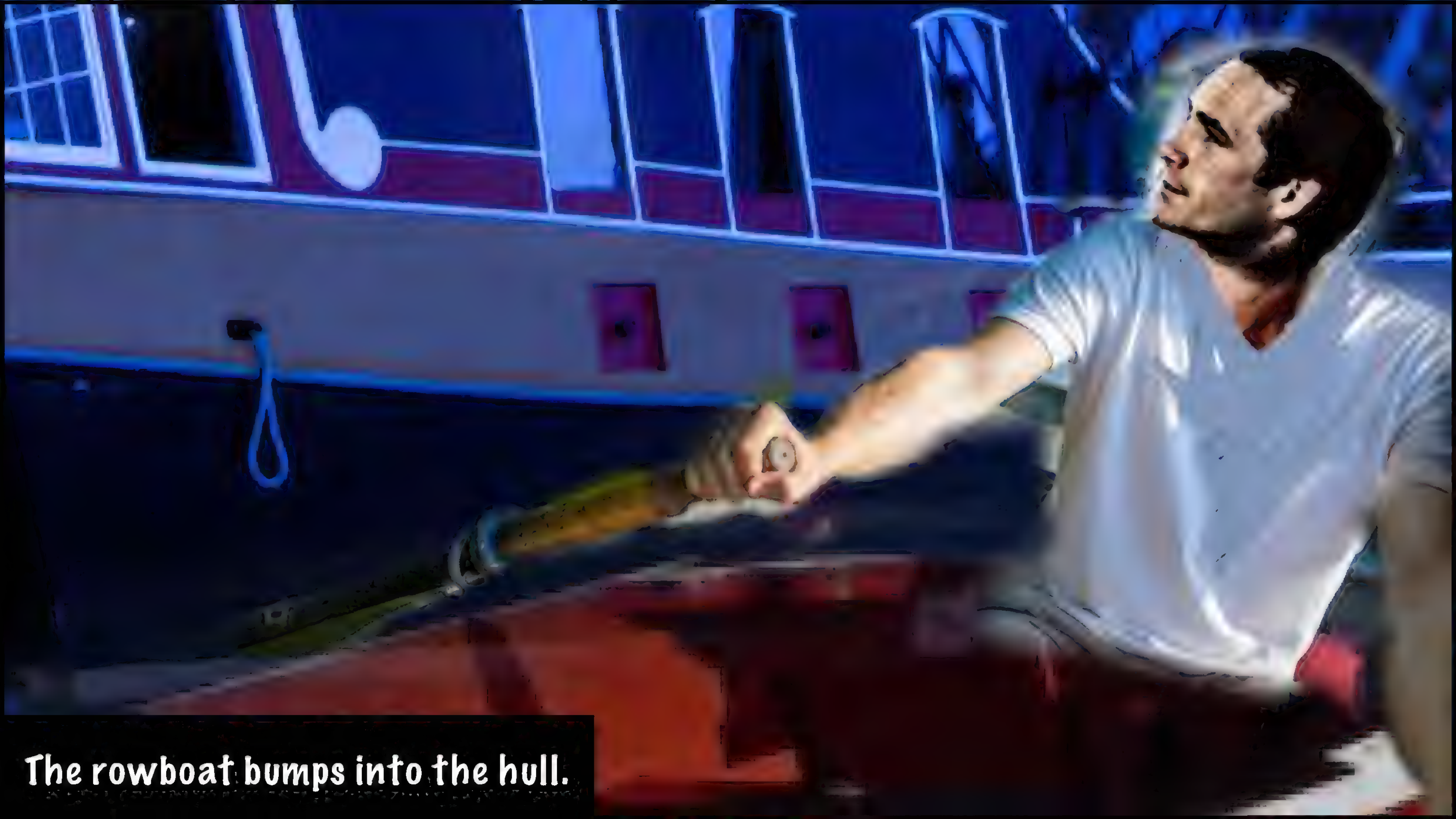


Thax wobbles
to his feet.
Duff is gone
and the
flashlight is
on the
bottom of
the swamp.





Thax rows to the Hispaniola.



The rowboat bumps into the hull.

Mike Ransome steps out on deck.

Hey, Thax!
C'mon in man. My God,
it's good to see you.

You
can help me
pass the long
night.





I'm the king
of the insomniacs
you know.



Coffee?

"Let's have a go at the rum."



You
want a
drink?

I could use one.



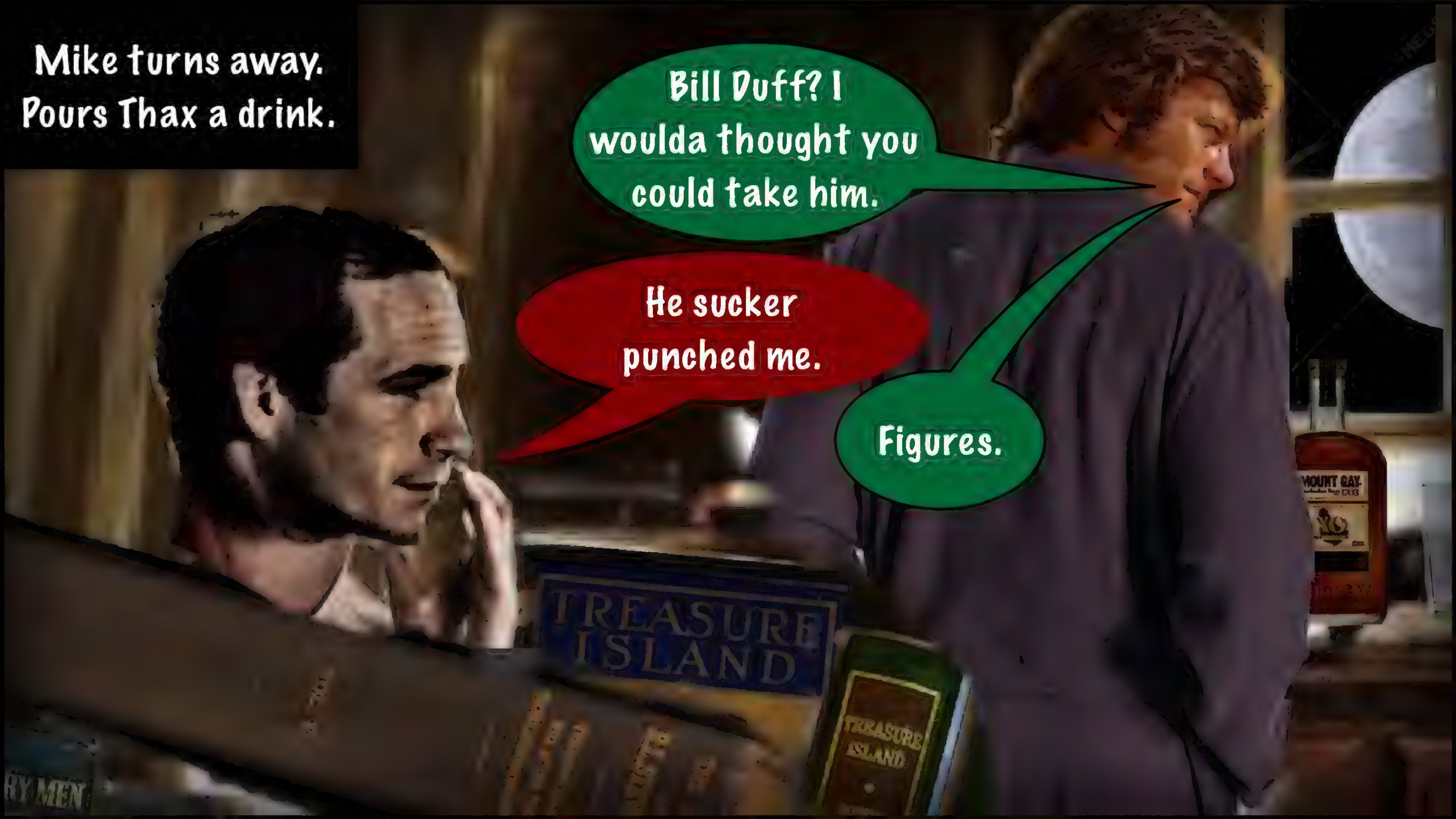
What
happened to your
face?

You know Bill
Duff?



You're kidding?

You got that drink?



Mike turns away.
Pours Thax a drink.

Bill Duff? I
woulda thought you
could take him.

He sucker
punched me.

Figures.

Mike
turns back
and hands
Thax a
glass of
rum.

I heard you gave poor
Duff a beating once, Mike.

I did. He was
running his
dirty mouth.

I know how
that is, I hate a
mouthy guy.



So
what's between you
and Duff?

Just an old
grudge. We used to work in
carny years ago. Me and
Bill and May.




How
'bout a
refill


My
pleasure

Ransome pours him more rum, then...



A close-up, slightly blurred image of a woman with dark, curly hair. She is looking off to the side with a neutral expression. The lighting is soft, and the background is out of focus.

I like 'em
at this time of
night. Their
hormone levels
are higher.

A close-up, slightly blurred image of a man with a beard and mustache. He is holding a glass in his hand, and his gaze is directed towards the camera. The lighting is warm, and the background is out of focus.

Is that a
fact.



Yeah, make
yourself at home.
Finish the rum, play
some music. I won't be
back till morning. You
can flop here if you
like.

Mike heads out the door.

Thax lifts his glass.

Here's to the
young and hard.

He swallows his drink.

Then he grabs the bottle and swills from it.



Later.

Thax. You
alright?

Ugh... go away.

Thax
lies
passed
out on
the
dock.
Jerry
tries to
revive
him.



Thax rolls over
and gets a view
of Bev's legs.





She looks like the Fifty-Foot-Woman.



Thax tries to sit up.


But it's too much for him.





The pig. The pig
puked on me.

He's sick.



He puked on
me for chrissake,
Jerry.


Tree house...

C'mon Bev, we
gotta get him home.



Make him lay in it,
the filthy bastard.

It's not his
fault, huh?

A photograph of a man and a woman laughing together. The man, on the right, is wearing a light blue t-shirt and has his head tilted back, laughing heartily. The woman, on the left, has short blonde hair and is also laughing, looking towards the man. A bright pink speech bubble is overlaid on the image, pointing towards the woman.

You saying
it's mine?



Getting that
crap on my nylons.

She furiously wipes her stocking with a Kleenex.

Jerry and Bev
help Thax across
the suspension
bridge to the
Treehouse.



They carry him into Tarzan's Hut and drop him on the bed.



He collapses.

Okay, that's
the good deed
for the year.



Now let's
get out of here.



As they depart, Thax tries to focus.



A man with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is lying on his back on a bed. He has his eyes closed and his mouth slightly open, appearing unconscious or dead. The bed has a white sheet and a blue blanket. The room is in a state of extreme disarray and is engulfed in flames. The walls and ceiling are made of a material that is crumbling and falling apart, with large pieces of debris hanging in the air. Bright orange and yellow fire is visible in the upper right corner of the frame. The overall scene is one of intense danger and chaos.

The room starts to
spin like a fiery
wheel.

He closes his eyes and the
nightmares begin.



Distorted dreams come and go.



May with Ransome's head.

May and Billie in
tuxedo outfits.





Rob Cochrane.

Billie kissing May.





Long John Silver.



Jimmy in a dress.



Then rats.

Hey Thax,
wake up.

Wake up.

Rats running,
playing on his
shoulder blades, then
clawing.

The rats turn into a monkey.



Wake up! I need
to talk to you!



Wake up.

The monkey becomes Terry Orme. He tries to shake Thax awake.

Orme starts to spin, slowly at first, then faster.

Listen
to me can't
you?

Listen
to me can't
you?

Listen
to me can't
you?

Thax sinks deeper into his pillow.

Uugh, go 'way.

A man with dark hair and a mustache is screaming with his mouth wide open and hands raised in the air. He is wearing a dark t-shirt. In the foreground, another man with dark hair is lying face down on a couch with black and white horizontal stripes. He is wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. A green speech bubble points from the screaming man to the text.

I got trouble.

Thax passes
out. A very
long silence,
then...



A terrified
SCREAM in the
night, going
down, down,
down, until:

SPLAT!

**Thax sits up suddenly
and opens his eyes.**



He hears
voices from
outside.
Erratic blades
of light slice
through the
struts of the
treehouse.



Thax gets up and steps outside.




Down below, a gang of people stand around a small still shape.



Thax strains to see what they see.



Flashlight
beams
whizz
around
until one
lands on
Thax's face.

A man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, is looking upwards with a concerned expression. A bright, circular beam of light from a flashlight is focused on his face. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting an outdoor night setting.

Hey! Somebody's up
there.

Thax gets the spins again and he vomits over the rail.



The crowd below yells and scatters.





He hears the sound of a cop **POUNDING** up the steps.

Later,
Thax sits
on the
ground.
The cop,
Iturbi,
tries to
yank him
to his
feet.

Wake up
asshole.

A scene from a movie showing a man in a suit (Thax) being pulled up by a police officer (Iturbi) who is shouting 'Wake up asshole.' The scene is set outdoors at night, with a street light illuminating the area. Other police officers are visible in the background.

Ferris points to a
crumpled shape on
the ground.

What do you
know about that?

A couple of people move
aside to reveal...

Terry Orme. DEAD.



The cops
grill Thax in
the
bunkhouse.

You sober enough to talk now?

I guess. I only drank
half a bottle of rum.

Is
that all?
Really?




A still from the movie 'The Incredibles' showing Mr. Incredible, Elastigirl, and Dash. Mr. Incredible is on the left in a brown suit, Elastigirl is in the center in a red suit, and Dash is on the right in a white shirt, looking surprised. Three speech bubbles are overlaid on the image.


What about
this midget?

I don't know.
He was scared.

Scared of what?
How do you know he was
scared of anything?

A man in a dark suit and tie is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to his right with a concerned expression. A red speech bubble is positioned above his head, containing text. In the background, another person is partially visible, looking towards the man in the foreground.

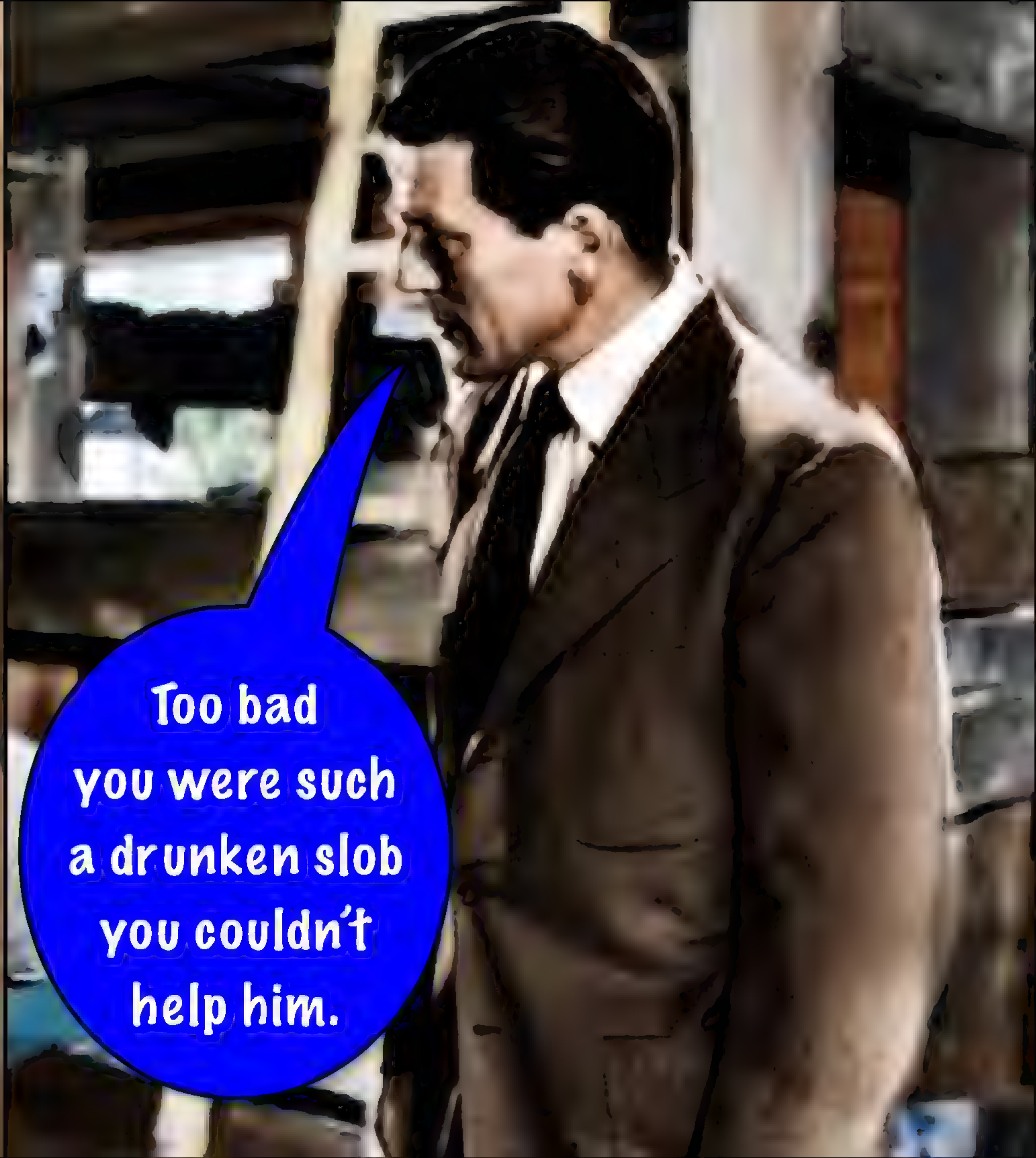
Because he came
to me for help. Said he
was in trouble.

A man in a dark suit and tie is shown from the chest up, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. A blue speech bubble is positioned in front of him, containing text. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or indoor setting.

That's all? Said
he was in trouble? Then
what? He ran away?

A close-up shot of a man in a light-colored suit jacket and a light blue shirt. He has a pained or distressed expression, with his eyes squeezed shut and his mouth open in a grimace. His hand is raised to his forehead. A red speech bubble is positioned above his head.

**No. I passed
out on him.**

A medium shot of a man in a dark brown suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking down and slightly to his left with a somber or regretful expression. A blue speech bubble is positioned to his left.

**Too bad
you were such
a drunken slob
you couldn't
help him.**



You think he jumped?

What? Killed himself. No.



He had too much
to live for.

I agree. He
climbed around in trees
for a living. There's no way
he slipped.



You know Bill Duff?



You know I do.

He found the
body. Said he happened to encounter
you earlier, prowling around the swamp
with a flashlight.






I couldn't sleep.

You know that kid Jimmy Bentley? A little on the girly side? Have any idea where he might be?

No.



You can go,
Thaxton.

Oh, uh, I have to
ask. You didn't pitch that midget
out of his tree, did you?

No.

Don't leave
the state.

Thax and Billie drive down the coast highway.



A vintage red convertible car is parked on a beach. In the background, a man and a woman are visible. The man is wearing a light-colored shirt and the woman is wearing a red and white polka-dot hat. They are standing near some buildings and a body of water. The car is a classic model with a prominent chrome grille and round headlights. The background shows a beach scene with some buildings and a body of water under a clear sky.

Poor folks. Can't
live in the nice plushy
Mediterranean like us.

Thax parks near the beach.

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, is leaning forward and talking to a man. The man is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a patterned tie. They are in an indoor setting with large windows in the background showing a tropical beach scene with palm trees and a blue ocean. A pink speech bubble is next to the woman, and a red speech bubble is next to the man.

C'mon, let's
go swimming.

No suits.



Thax drops his shorts.

He races across the sand to catch her.

Hey!



He
dives
in and
swims
after
her.



A person with a green mohawk is swimming in the ocean, creating a large splash of white water. The background shows the dark, choppy surface of the water.

It's glorious.

It's like
how our whole future
is going to be.

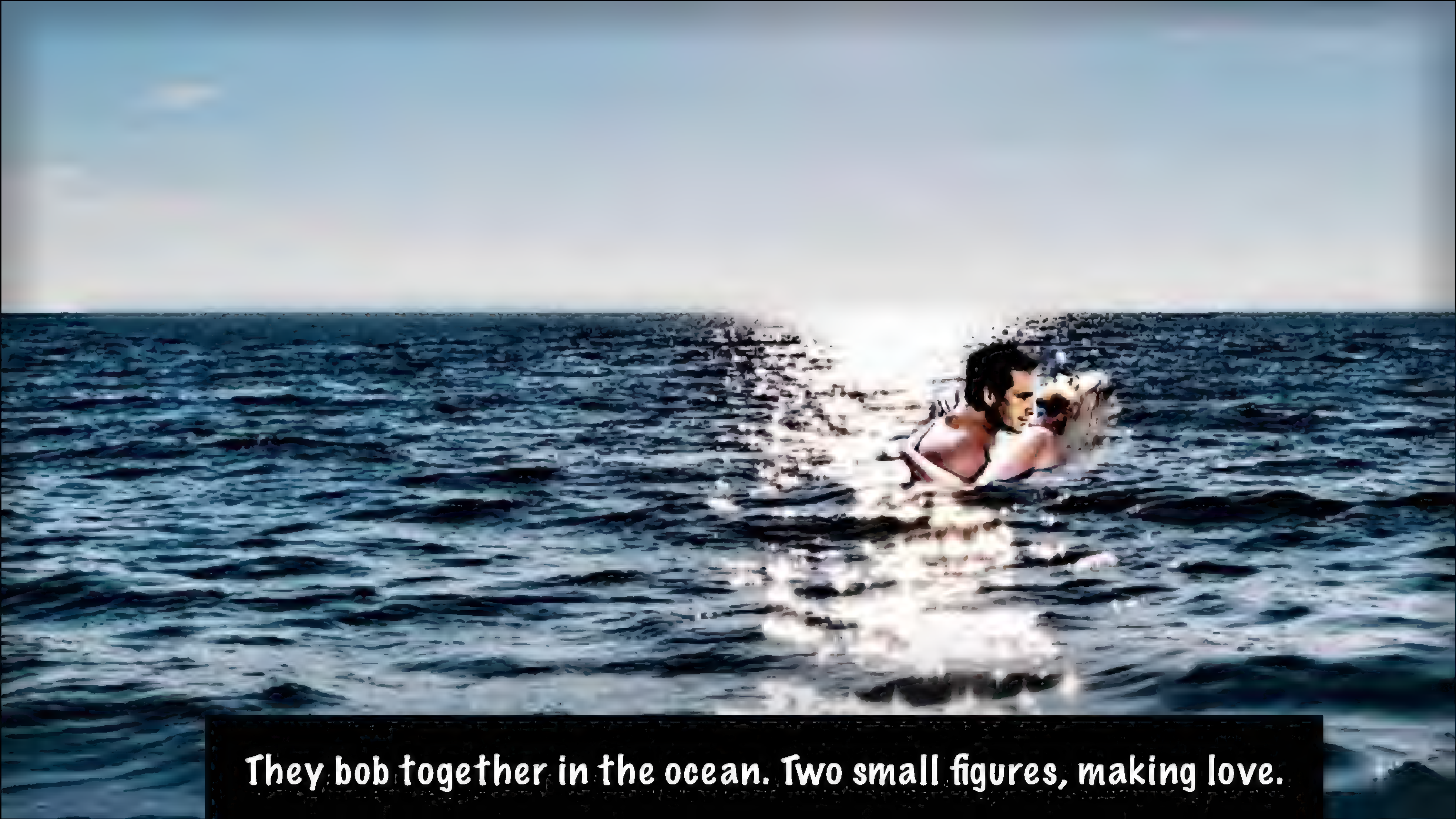
Thax catches up to her.

C'mon, Billie.
Let's go back by
those trees.

No, here Thax.
Right here.



She slips her legs around him.



They bob together in the ocean. Two small figures, making love.



Later, they enter a trailer park.



PIT / AB
PUP FOR
SALE
\$900.00

A snarling pit bull crawls out from beneath a trailer.



Jimmy?
Jimmy
Bentley?


Don't go any closer, Thax. I saw a
pit bull bite a woman on TV once.

Jimmy's mom opens the door.

What do
you want?

I want
to talk to
Jimmy.

Uh, maybe he
mentioned me? My
name is Thax.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a green top with red floral patterns, is looking out from a doorway. The number '16' is visible on the wall to her right.

Maybe. You
from work?

A man with dark hair is shown in profile, looking towards a woman who is standing behind a counter. The woman is holding a glass bottle.

Yeah, I work
the shell game.

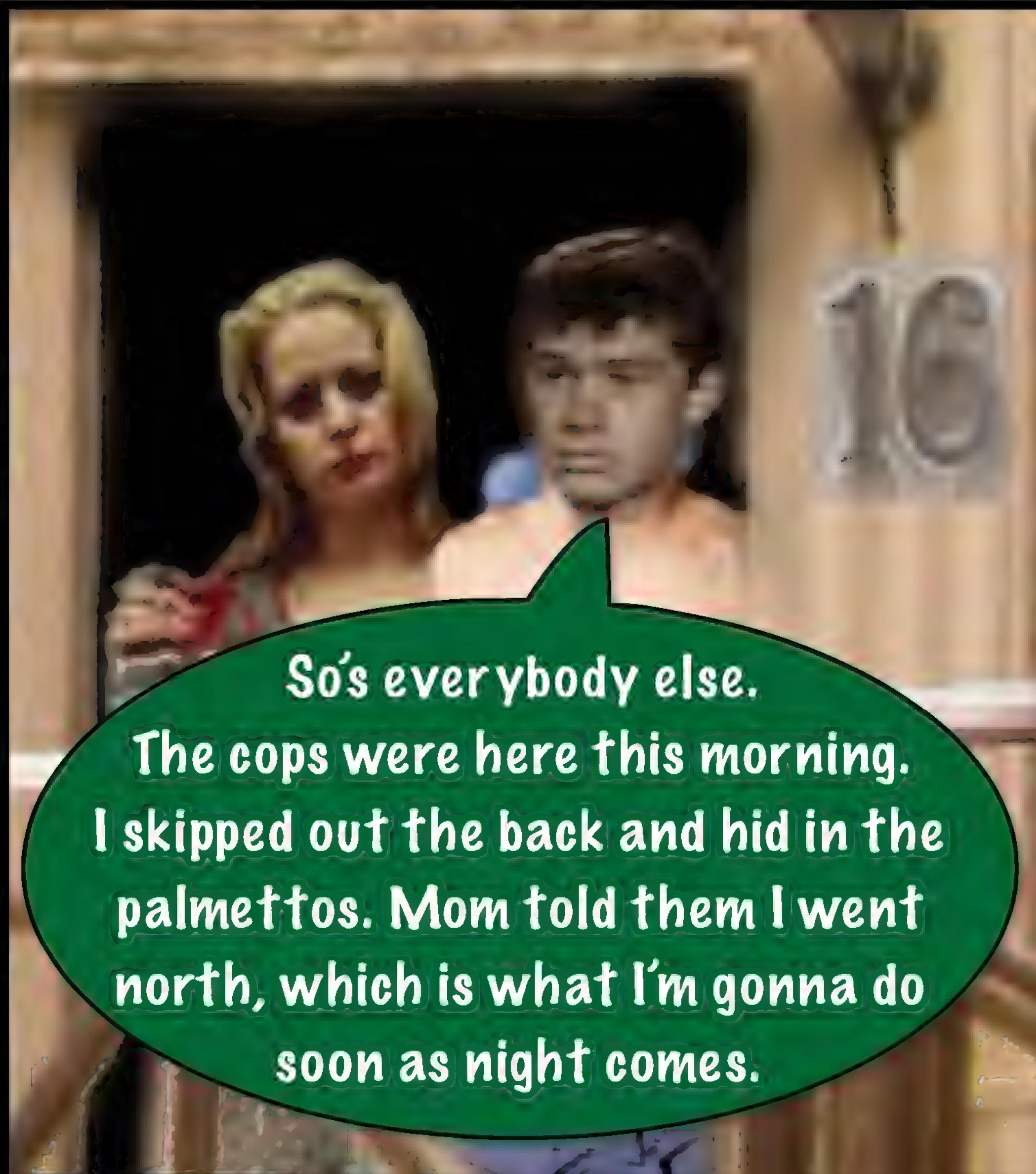
Jimmy
comes to
the door,
cautiously.

A man and a woman are in the foreground, looking at each other. In the background, a woman and a young boy are standing behind a counter. A sign is visible on the wall to the right.

What do you
want, Mr. Thaxton?



Just
wondering where
you went is all.



So's everybody else.
The cops were here this morning.
I skipped out the back and hid in the
palmettos. Mom told them I went
north, which is what I'm gonna do
soon as night comes.




Why?



People seem to think I know something and I don't. I'm scared.

Of what?

PT 1/1 AB
PUB. 1/1
SAL 1
905 1000

A man with dark hair and a mustache is shown in profile, speaking to a group of people. In the background, a young woman with blonde hair and a young man are visible. The scene appears to be set in a kitchen or a similar indoor environment. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image, containing text.

I guess finding Mr.
Cochrane like that, and all those
cops, then yesterday, that little
guy, the monkey man.

Terry
Orme?

Yeah,
he wanted to know if anyone was asking
questions about him.

He didn't mean the cops
either, he meant someone from the show.
He was scared.



Thax watches Jimmy's reaction closely.

He's dead.

Oh man...
oh man.

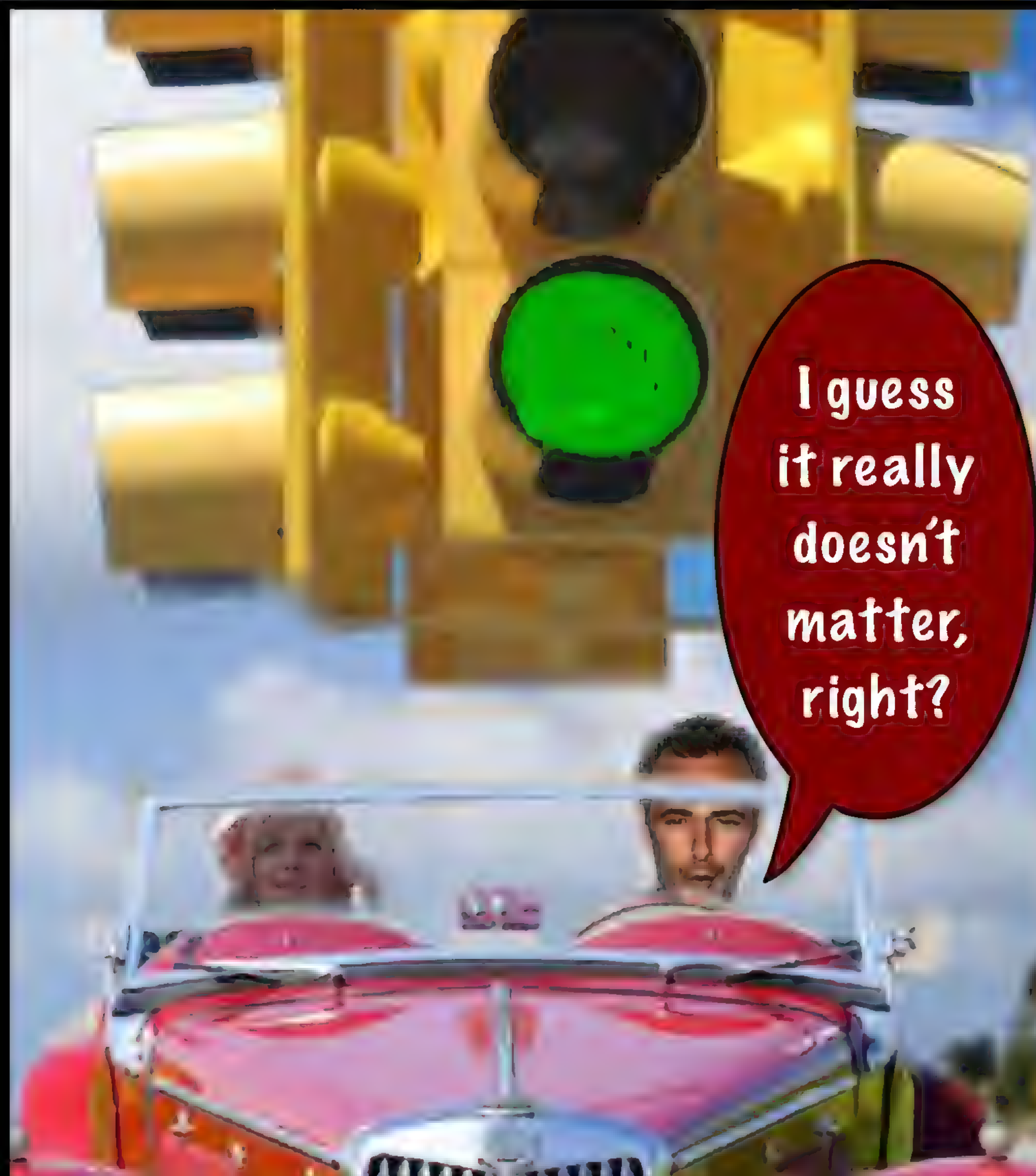
So does Billie.

They're
stopped at a
traffic light,
heading back
to
Dreamland,
having their
first fight.

It really
isn't any of your business,
you know. Maybe you should
just leave it alone.







They pull away.



A man with long dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, is walking from left to right. He is looking down and slightly to his right. To his left is a large, circular, light-colored sign with the words "WORLD'S TRANGEST PEOPLE" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some vertical structures that look like part of a stage or a building.

WORLD'S
TRANGEST
PEOPLE

That night, after closing, Thax heads for Dracula's Castle.

He enters and
walks down a
stairway that
leads to a door.



Jerry greets him at the door.

Uh-oh.
We better
get out the
handcuffs
before we let
you in here.

Just
sightseeing, Jerry.

Card game in progress. Ransome spots Thax as he enters.

Hey, Thax.
Over here. I'll even let
you deal for me!



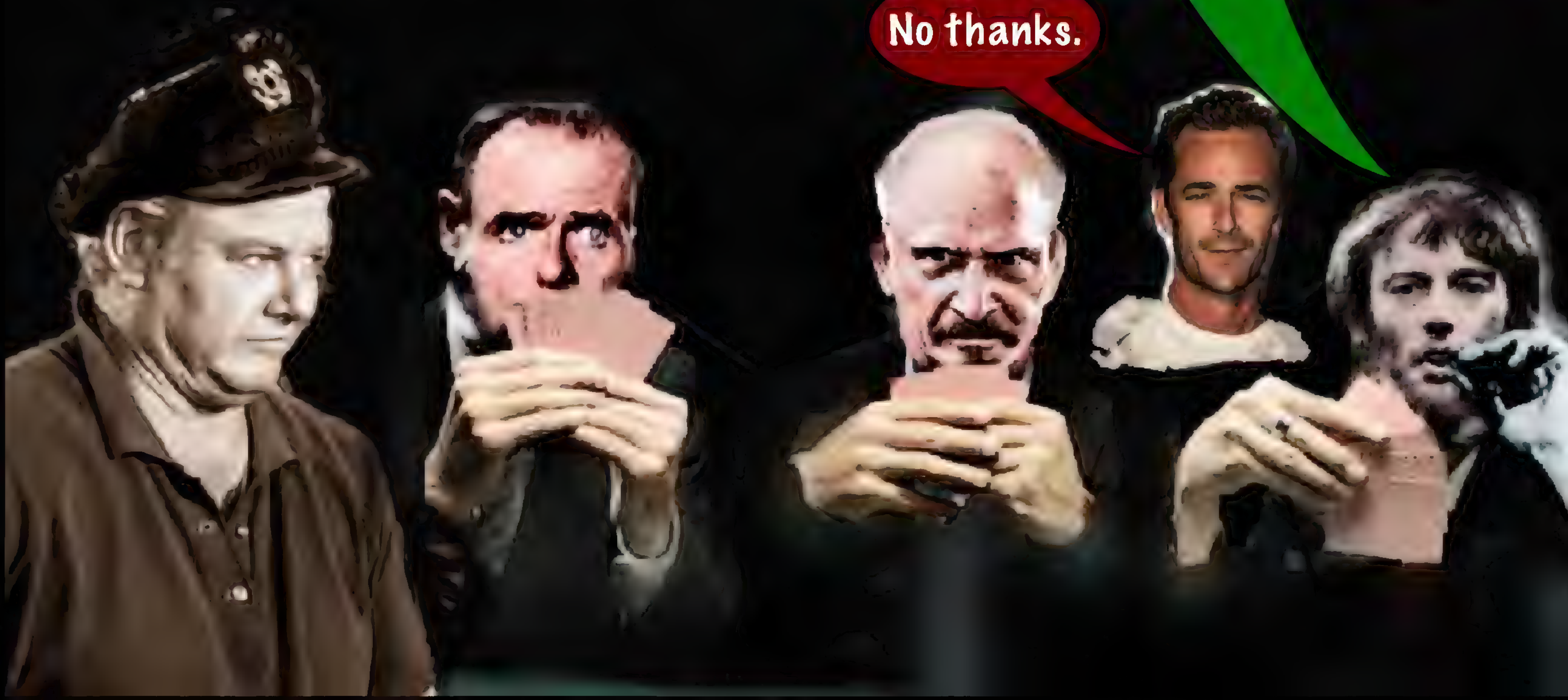


Duff shoots Thax a belligerent look.

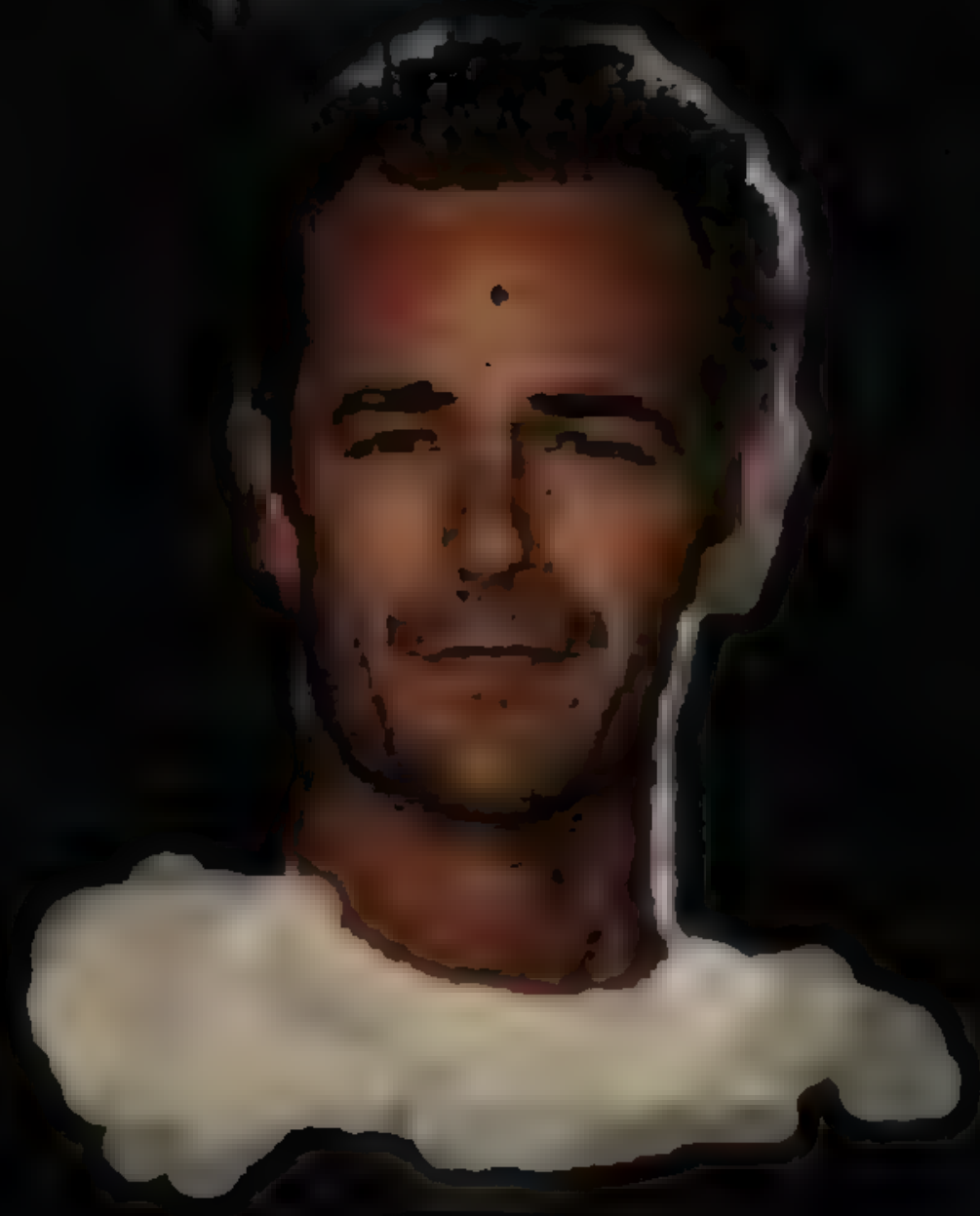
Thax pulls up a chair behind Mike.

Grab yourself a drink, Thax.

No thanks.



Ransome
shuffles
and deals.





Gabby gets a
black Ace.



Mike gets the
spade two.

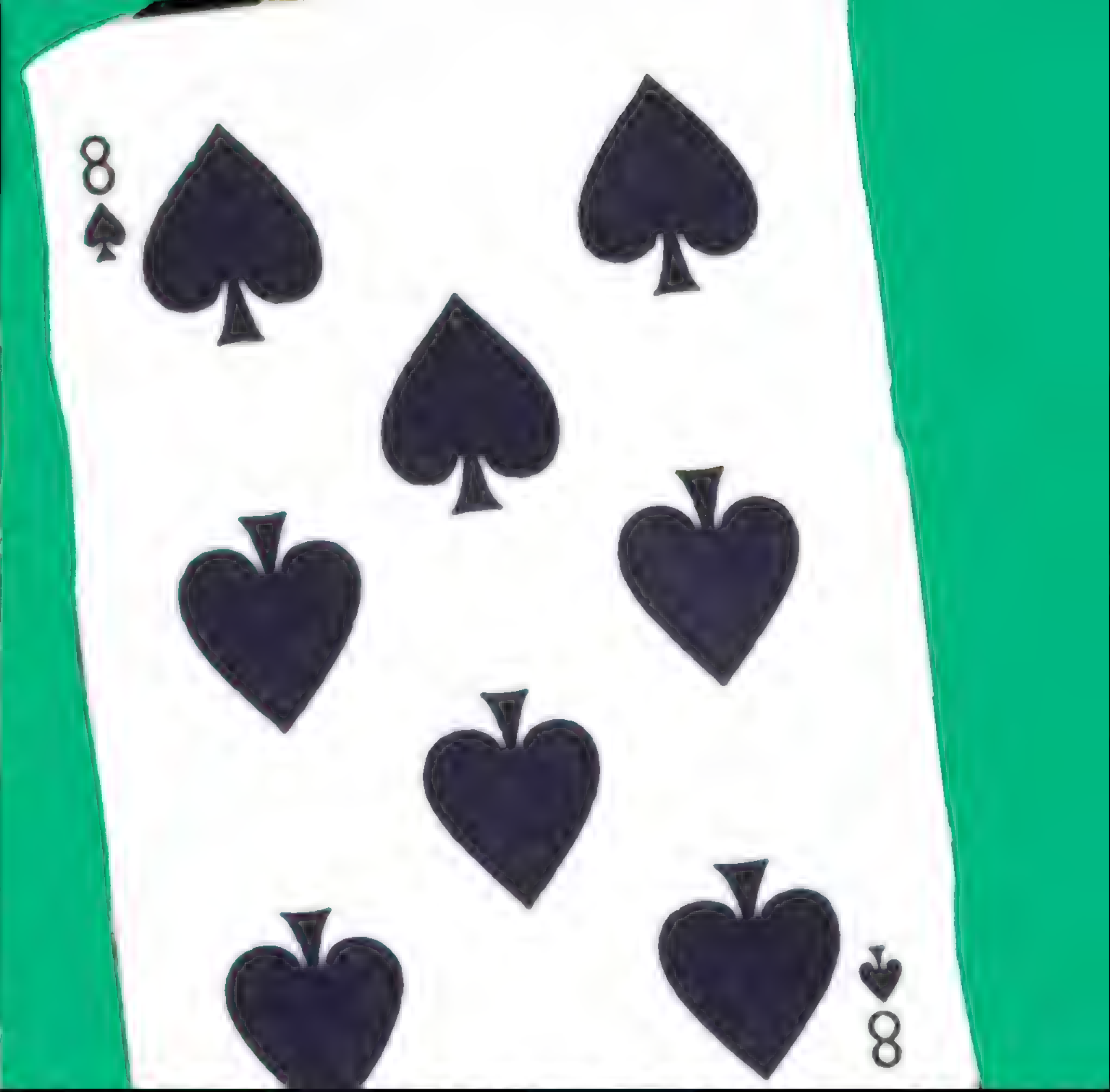


Duff has a pair of eights up. He bets.



Twenty.

Ransome deals again.



Duff gets another eight, three of a kind.



Time to
seperate the men from
the boys.



Duff bets three twenties.



Let's give old Bill a run
for his money, eh, Thax?

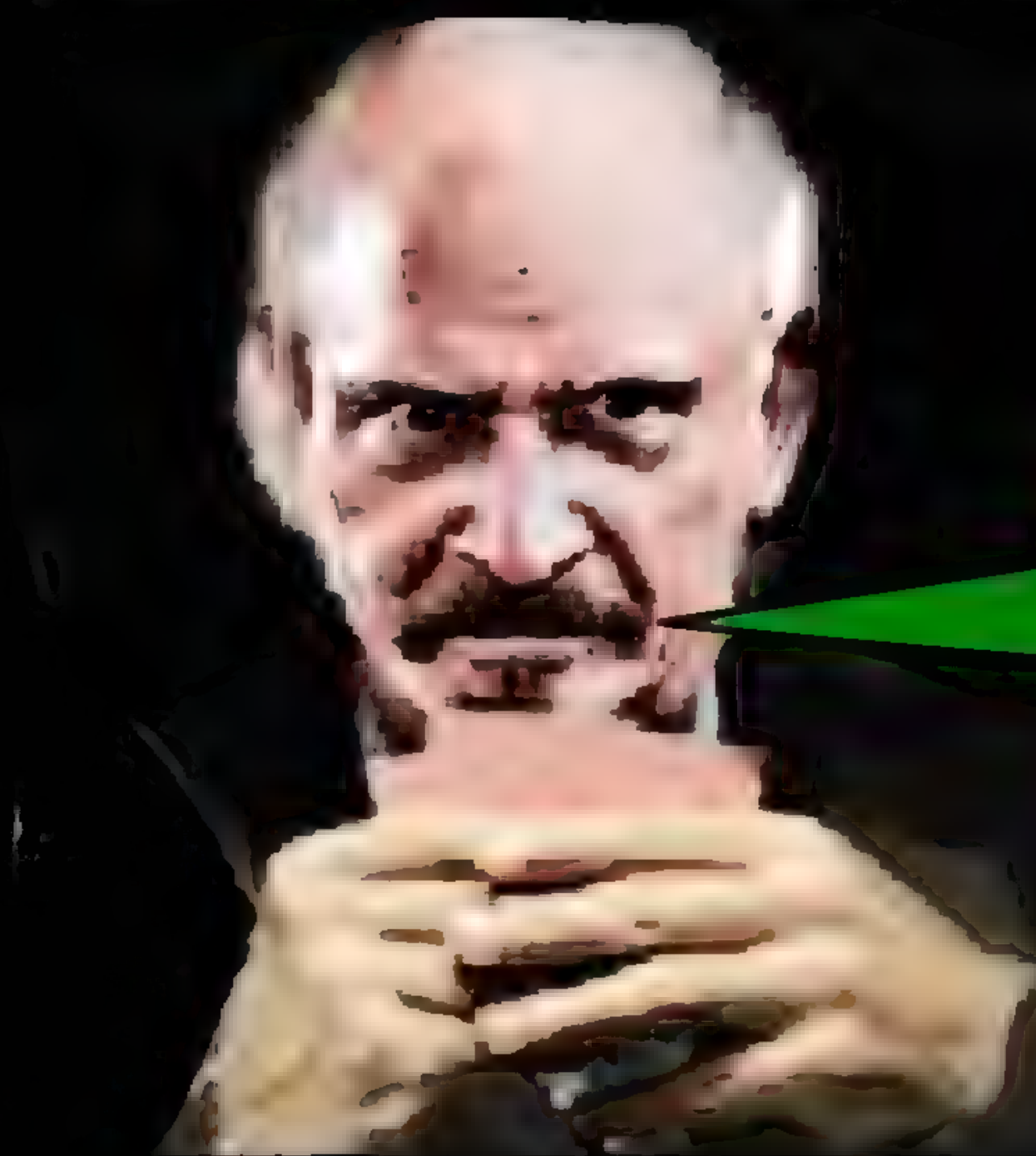
Ransome shoves eight twenties into the pot.

Ransome studies his cards, then...

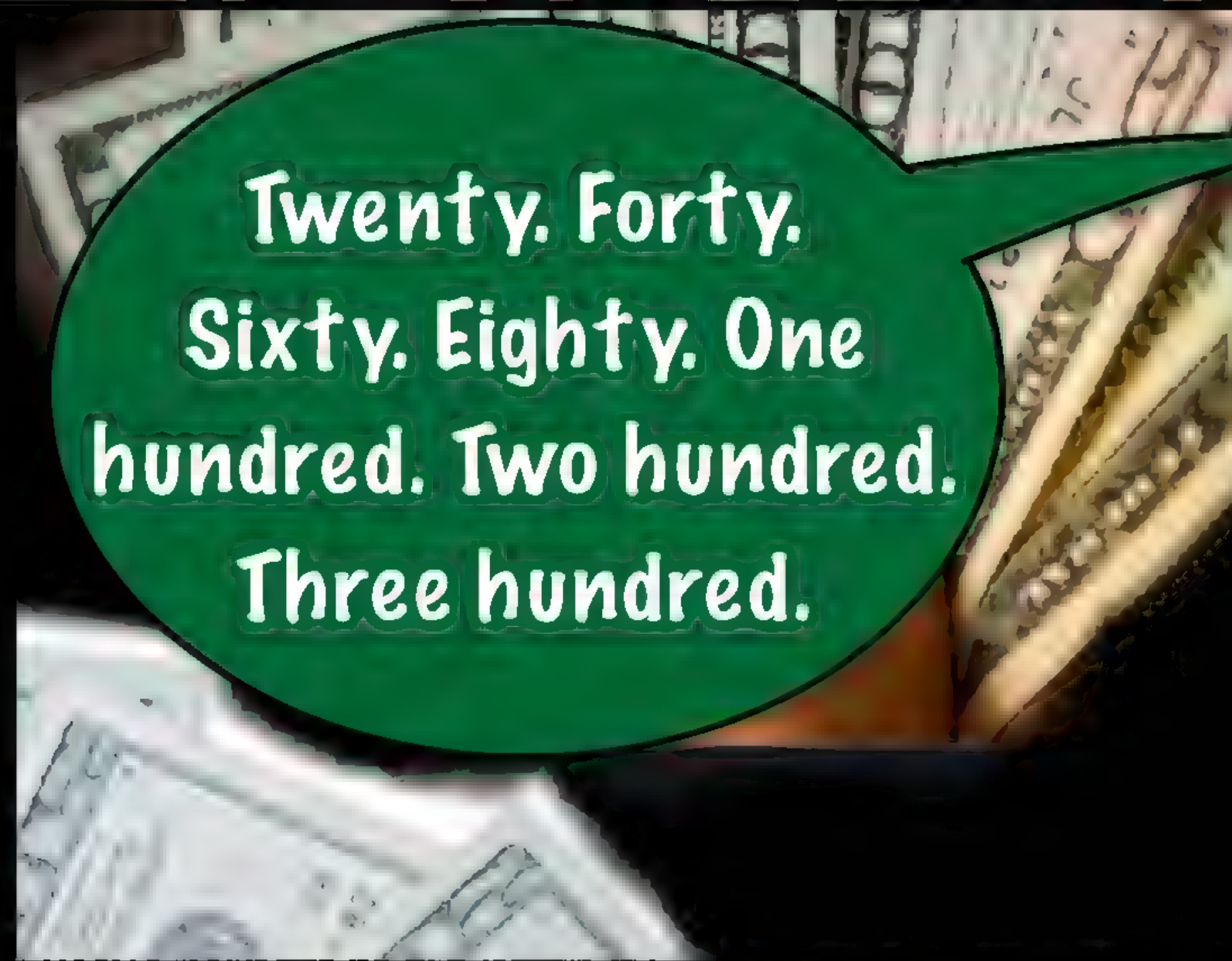
See the
sixty and
bump one
forty.

I'm out.

See one
forty and
bump again.



C'mon,
dammit. See
or fold.



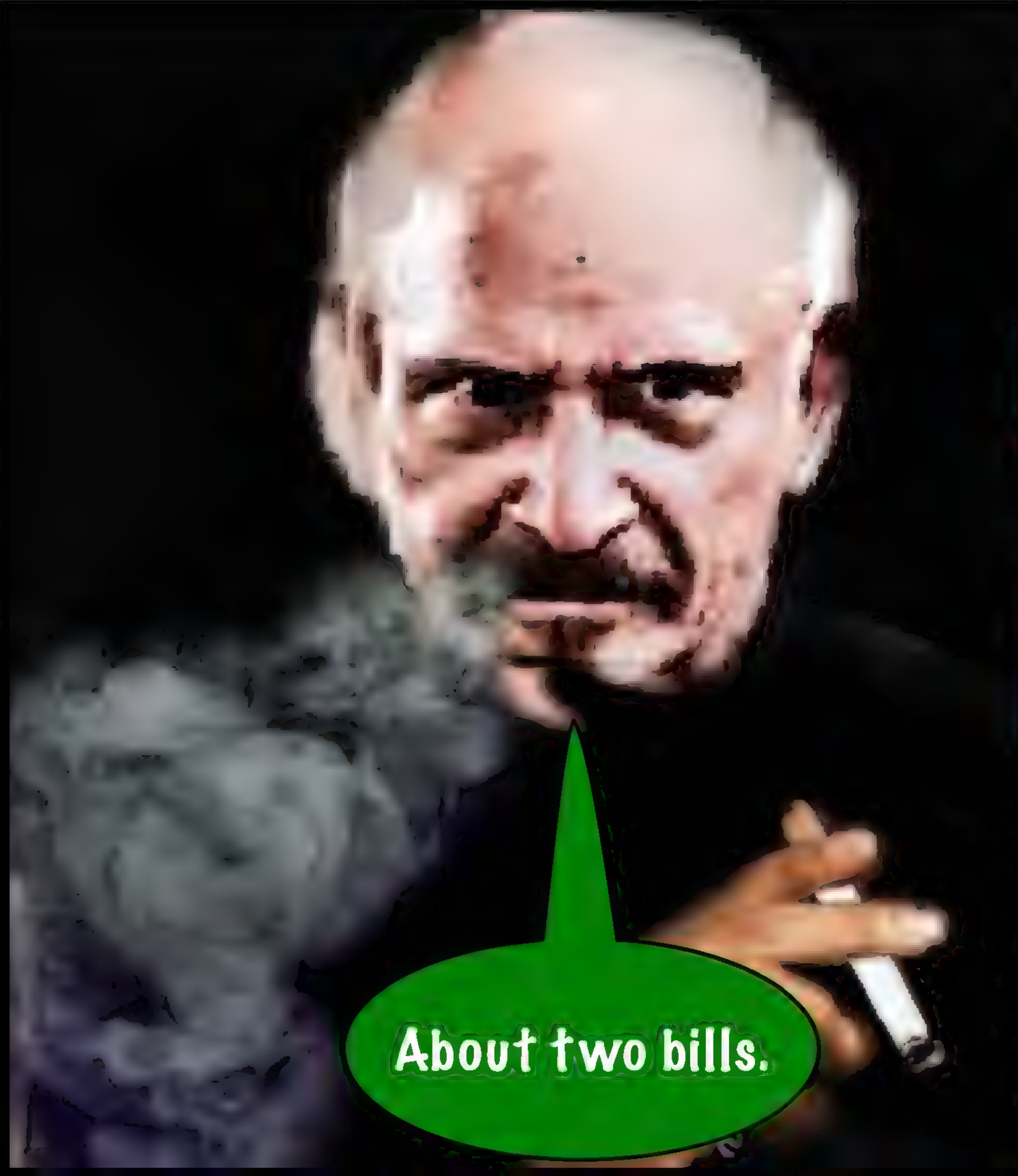
Twenty. Forty.
Sixty. Eighty. One
hundred. Two hundred.
Three hundred.

Ransome
ups the
stakes.

I haven't got
that much.



How much
have you got?



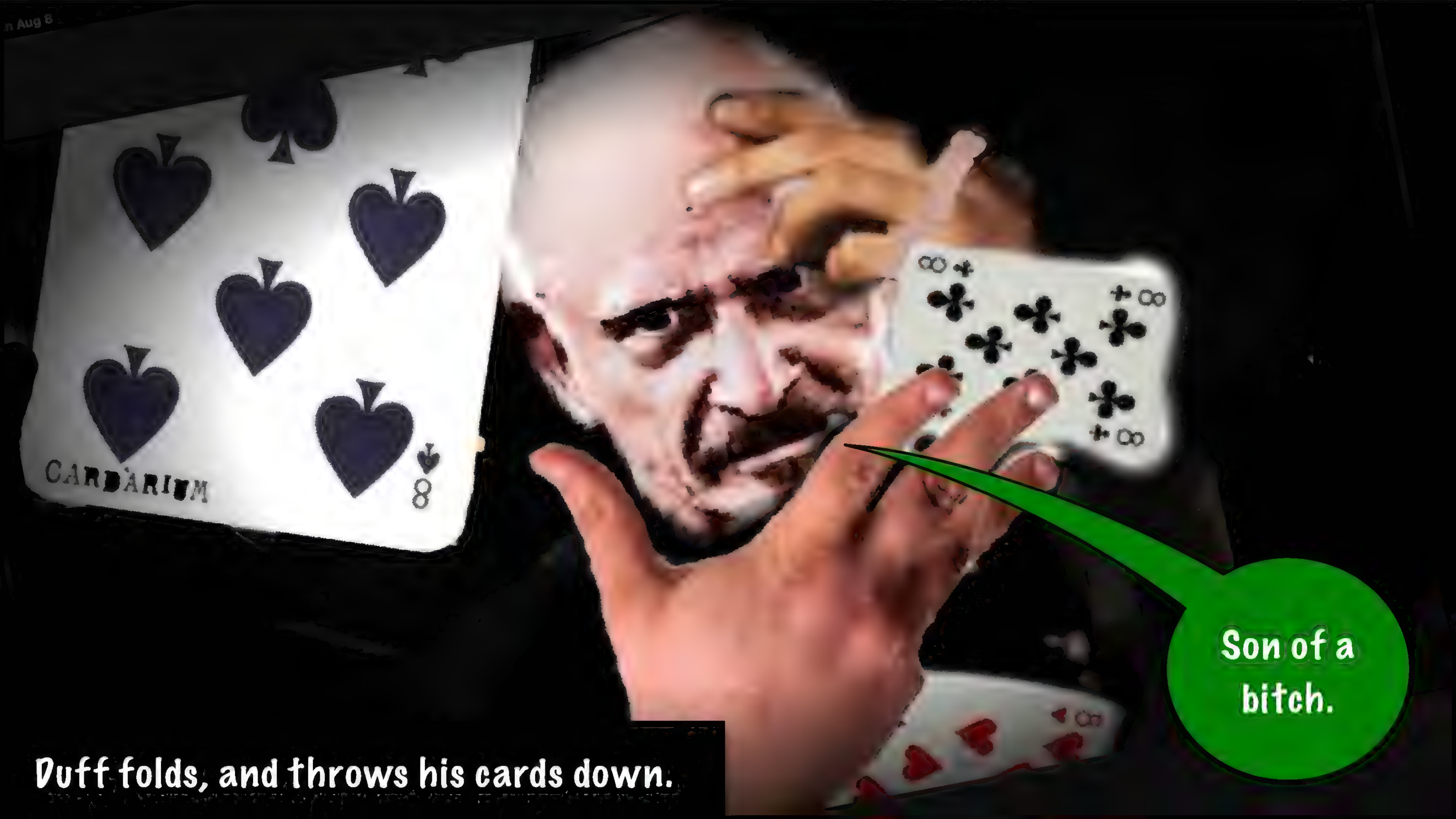
About two bills.



Shove
it in. Tomorrow's payday,
McDuff. I'll trust you
until then.

All eyes on Duff. A long tense moment, until...





Son of a
bitch.

Duff folds, and throws his cards down.

He hands his hole card to Thax.



Ransome laughs as he scoops up his winnings.



Give it to Bill
for Christmas, Thax.
I've got a date.


Ransome leaves.

Thax shows the hole card to Duff.





Duff storms off, humiliated by his loss.



Three of Clubs?
Jesus, that
Ransome is wild.


Listen, Jerry.
I need a favor.

Thax, Jerry and Eddie lurk in the shadows beneath Lloyd Franks' office.

What kind of box is it?

I don't know, for godsakes. I'm no safecracker.

Yeah, but is it a wall — a wall job or an upright — or — or a combo, or what? Know what I mean? What — what is it?



It's not in a wall, and
it's a combination box.



Well all right then.

I
just want —
want to know
what kind it
is, see?

A composite image featuring two men against a blue gradient background. On the left is a close-up of a man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt. On the right is a man in a security guard uniform, including a cap and a blue plaid shirt, with his arms crossed. A green speech bubble is positioned above the guard, containing text.

C'mon, let's go
before the security guard
comes staggering by.

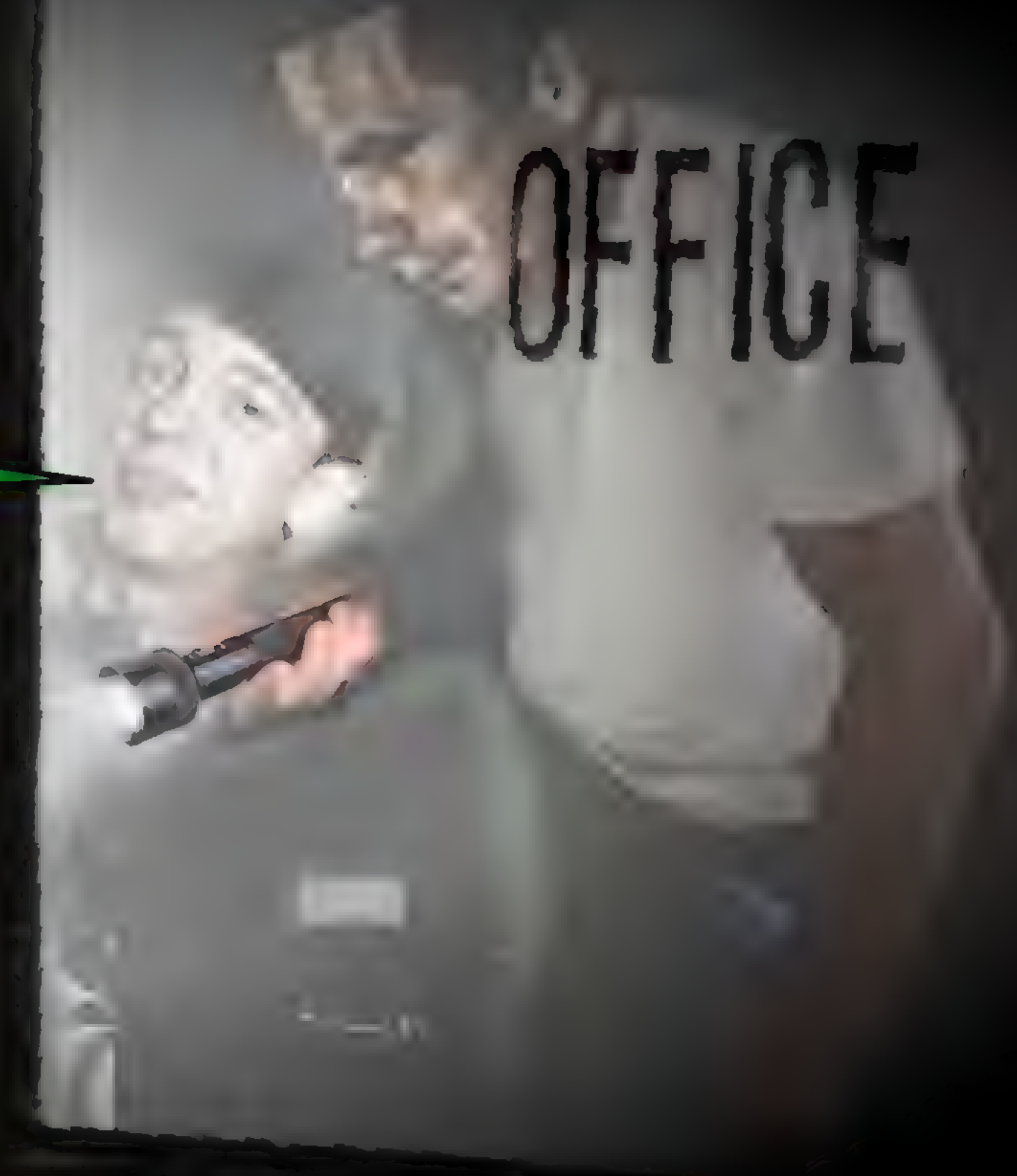
Eddie picks the lock.

Click!



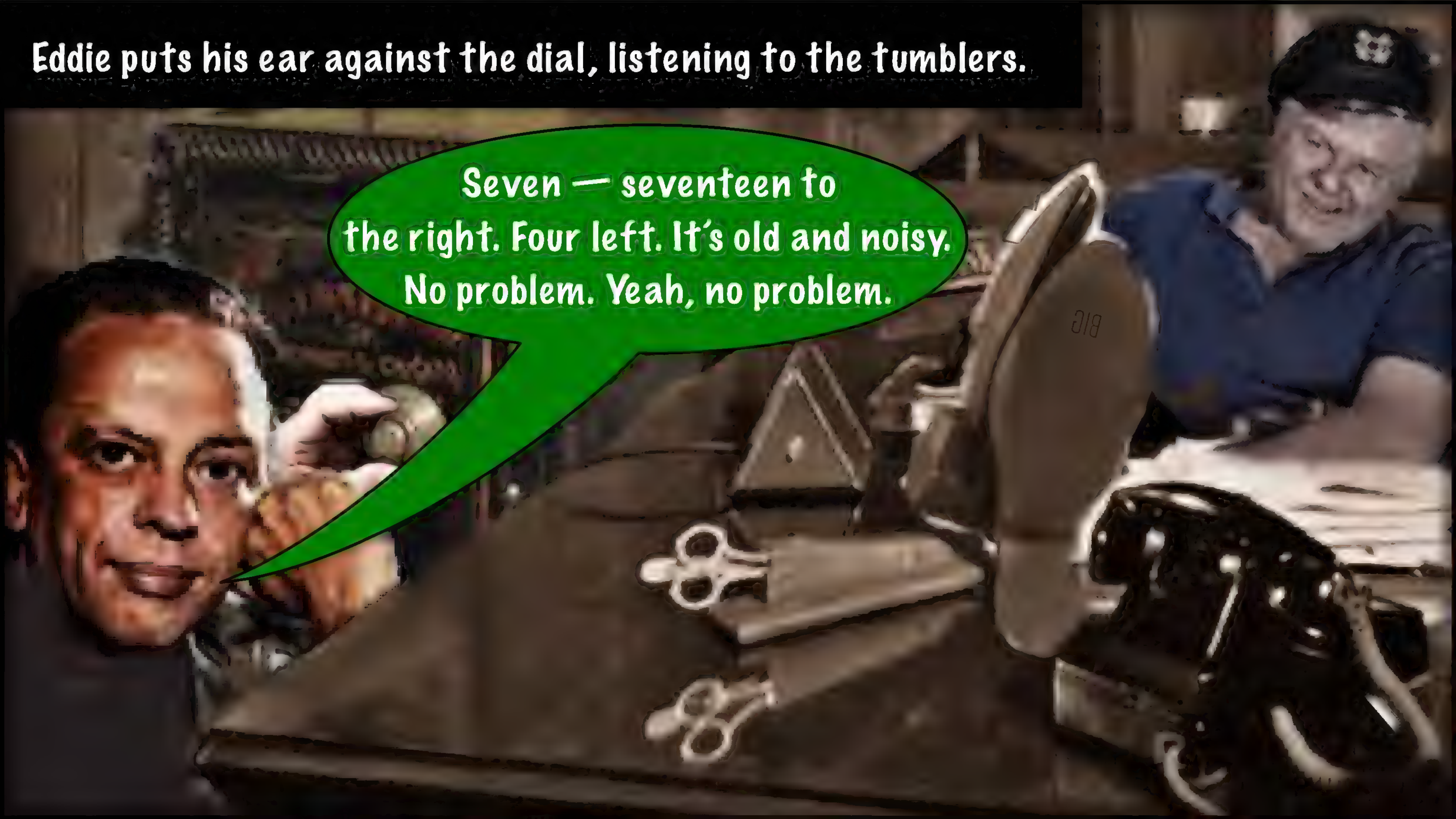
Thax shines a light on the safe for Eddie.

Yeah. It'll — it'll
take a couple of minutes
— know what I mean?
Couple of minutes.



Eddie puts his ear against the dial, listening to the tumblers.

Seven — seventeen to
the right. Four left. It's old and noisy.
No problem. Yeah, no problem.



Eddie opens the safe.



Thax reaches inside.

He grabs an envelope.

OPEN in case of my death.
Billie Peeler



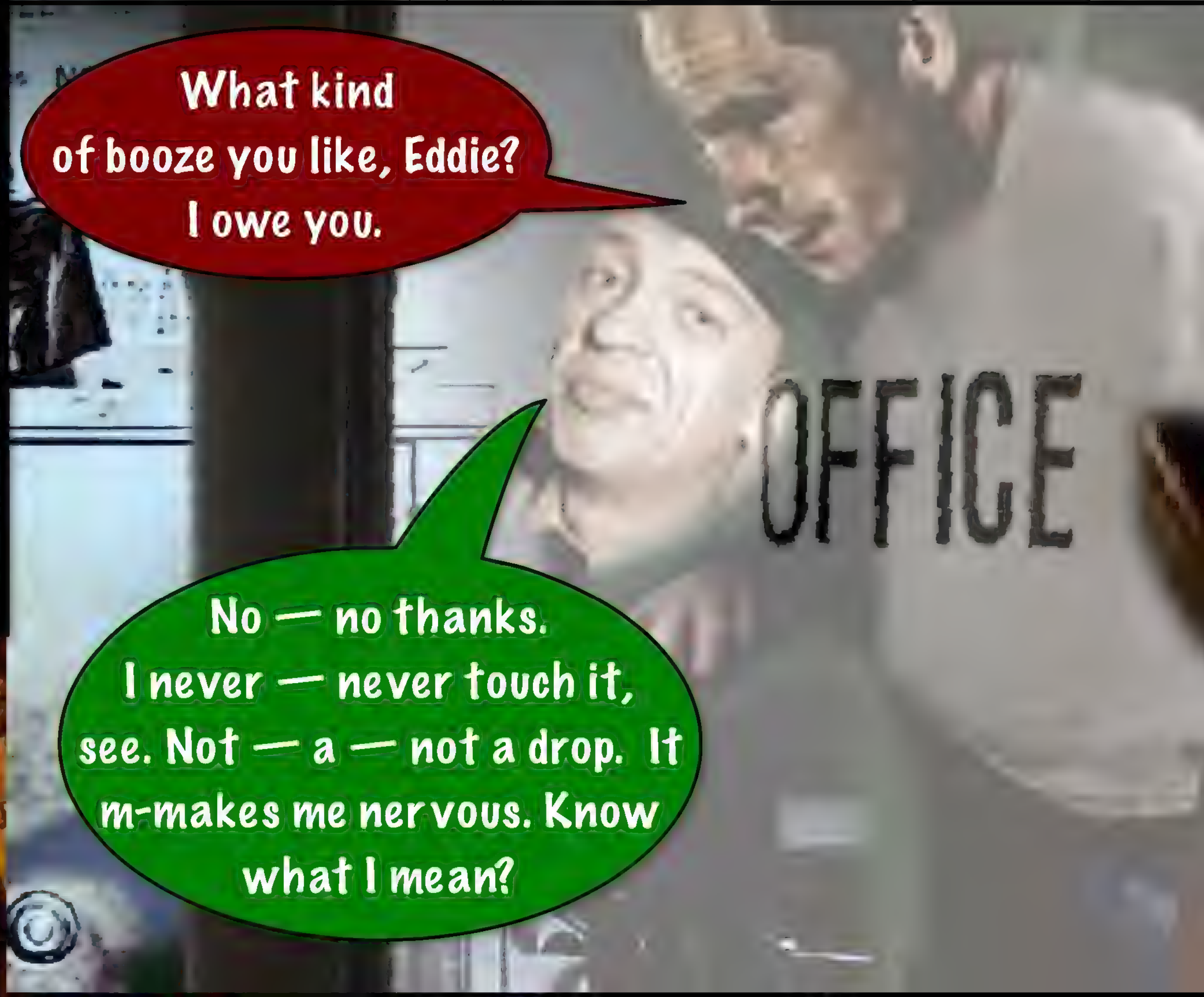


He slips the envelope in his pocket and closes the safe.

Eddie wipes the dial with
his handkerchief.

What kind
of booze you like, Eddie?
I owe you.

No — no thanks.
I never — never touch it,
see. Not — a — not a drop. It
m-makes me nervous. Know
what I mean?



Later that night.



Oooooo = = Oooooo = = Oooooo

The Viking Horn moans.

Thax closes up.





He strolls
over to the
Palace of
Illusions.



The last round of
marks exit the tent.

Thax heads around back.

I'm sorry, Thax.

For what?

For calling you an asshole.



A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace, nearly kissing. The man, on the right, has dark hair and is wearing a light blue shirt. The woman, on the left, has blonde hair and is wearing a dark top. A red speech bubble originates from the man, and a pink speech bubble originates from the woman. The background is dark and out of focus.

You can make it up to me.

How?

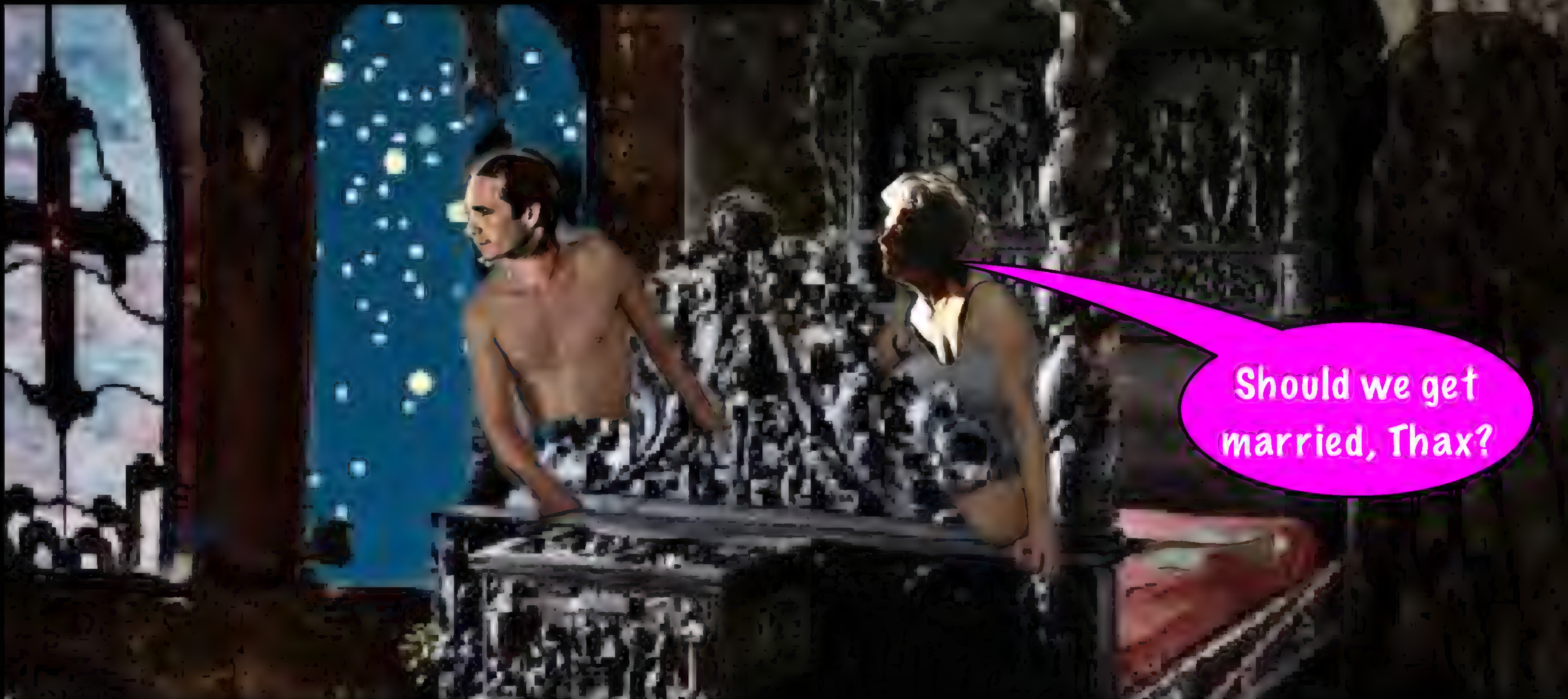
A man and a woman are shown in a dark, possibly indoor setting. The man, on the left, is wearing a light blue shirt and has his arm around the woman's shoulder. The woman, on the right, is wearing a grey top and looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. A red speech bubble is positioned in the upper left corner of the image.

Let's go
see Dracula.



Thax and Billie lie in Dracula's bed.

Thax gets up and looks out the window.



Should we get
married, Thax?



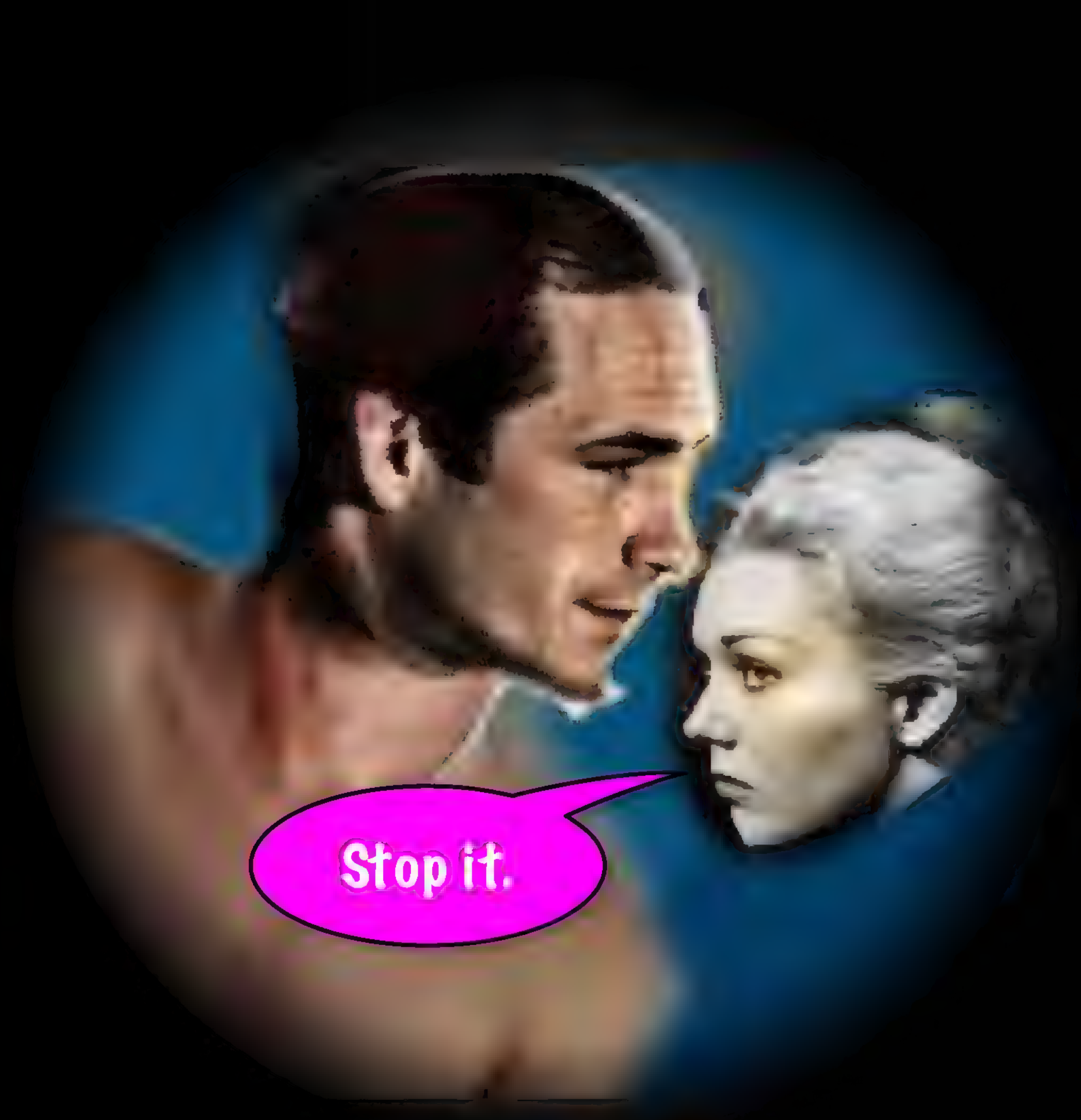
That's up to
you, isn't it?

What do
you mean? Why isn't it up
to both of us?

Because I don't have
much say in it, do I?



After all, it's
your money.



Stop it.

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, facing each other in a car at night. The background is dark blue with several out-of-focus white lights. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark jacket. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image. The first speech bubble is red and contains the text 'Well, it doesn't really matter, does it?'. The second speech bubble is pink and contains the text 'I wish to God you'd stop saying that, because it does matter.'.

Well, it
doesn't really
matter, does
it?

I wish to
God you'd stop saying
that, because it does
matter.

Saturday night. Thax is working
hard, getting a good play.



Gabby whistles, and gives a nod in the
direction of two tough characters.



Chad and Phil approach the shell game.



Chad steps up and flashes a badge.

**Mister
Thaxton, Lieutenant Ferris
wants to see you.**

**Find
another corpse?**

Chad's sidekick, Phil, chimes in.



Let's go,
bull's-eye.

Thax sweeps up his shells.

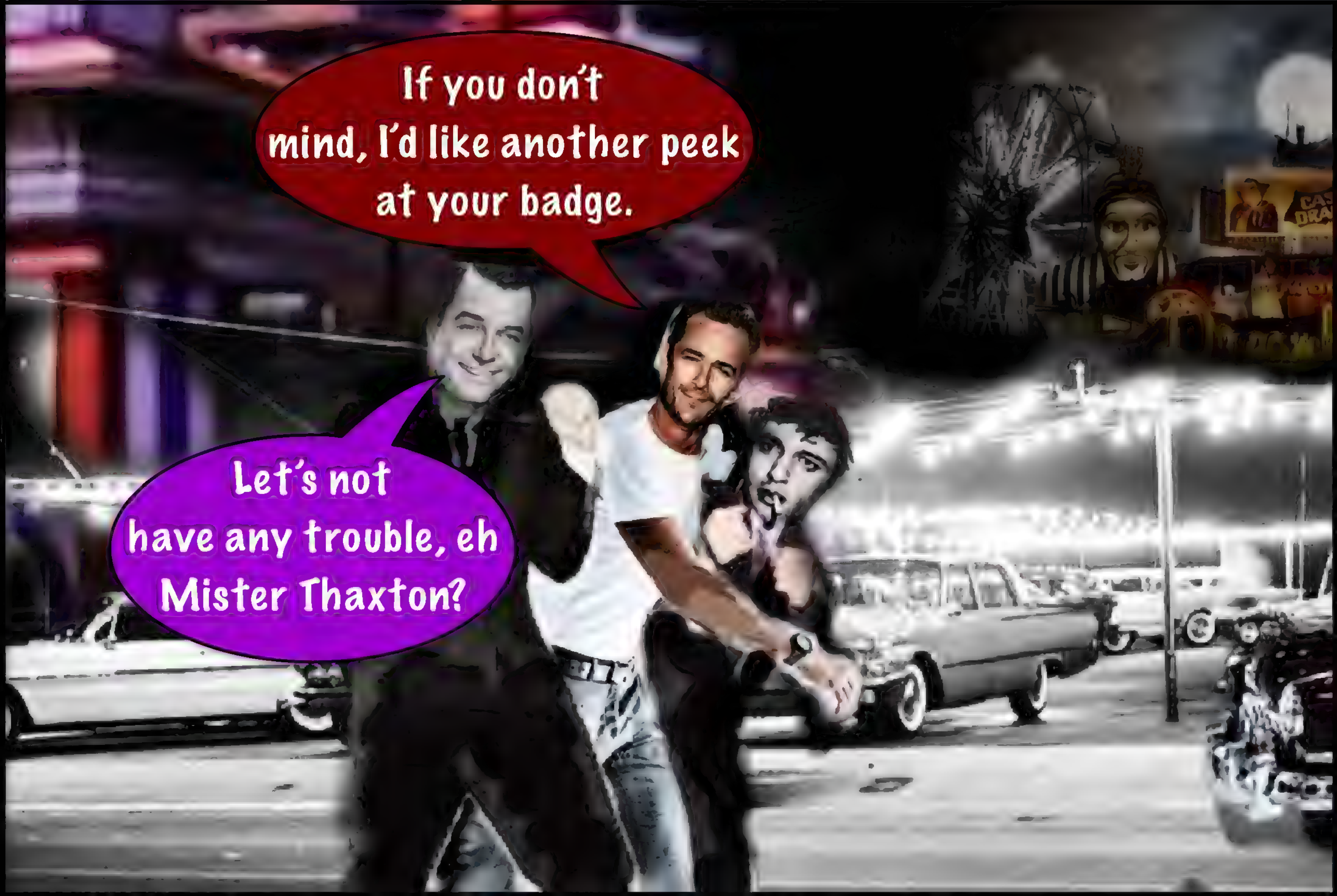
That's all for now,
folks!



As they
walk
through the
parking lot,
Thax lags
his pace.

If you don't
mind, I'd like another peek
at your badge.

Let's not
have any trouble, eh
Mister Thaxton?

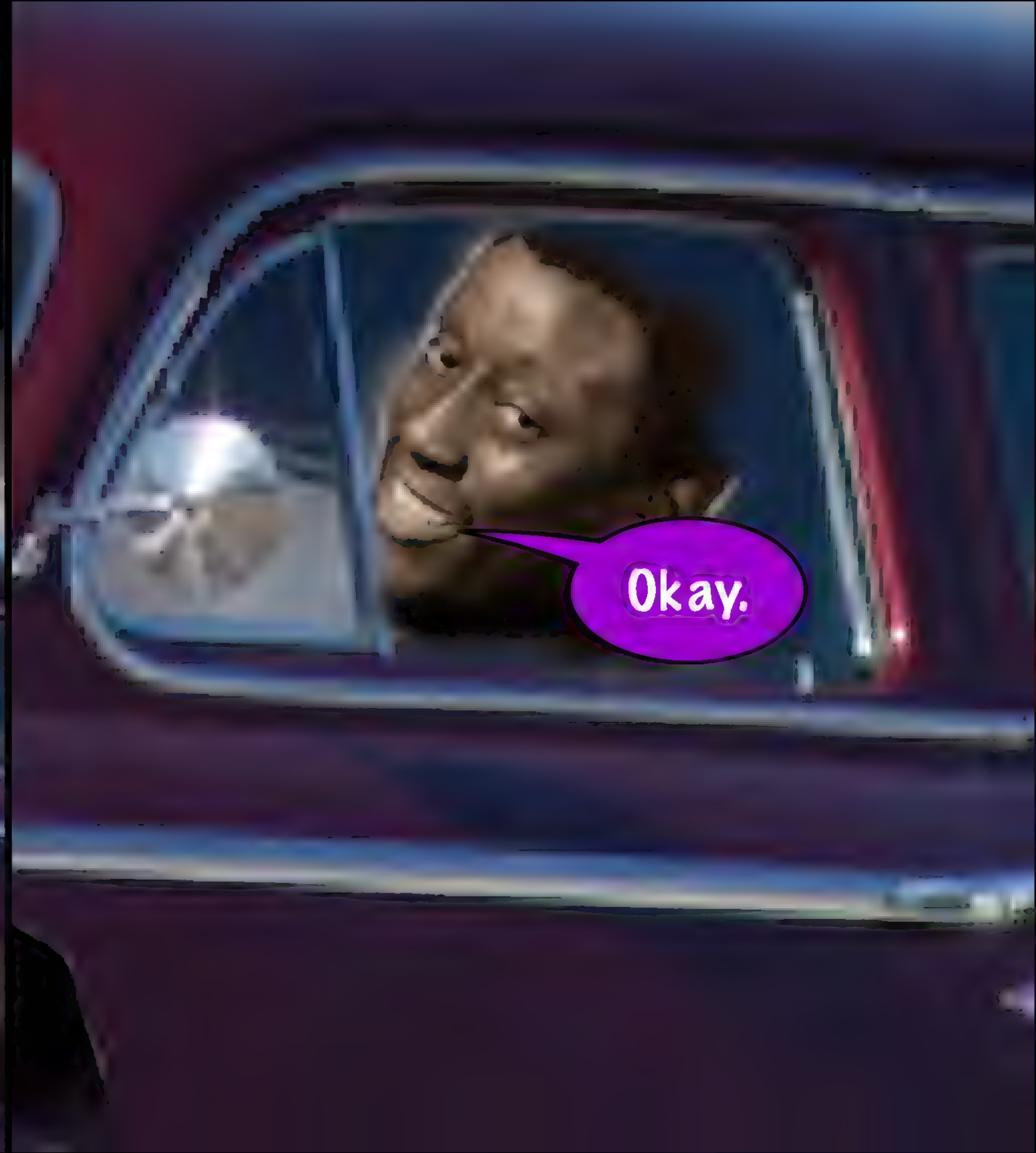


Phil jams his elbow into Thax's ribs.

He don't want no
trouble, do you, bull's eye?



Chad leads Thax to a big sedan. Bob, the driver, sits waiting at the wheel.



Thax pivots and slugs
Phil in the gut.





Chad gives Thax
a mean chop to
the neck.

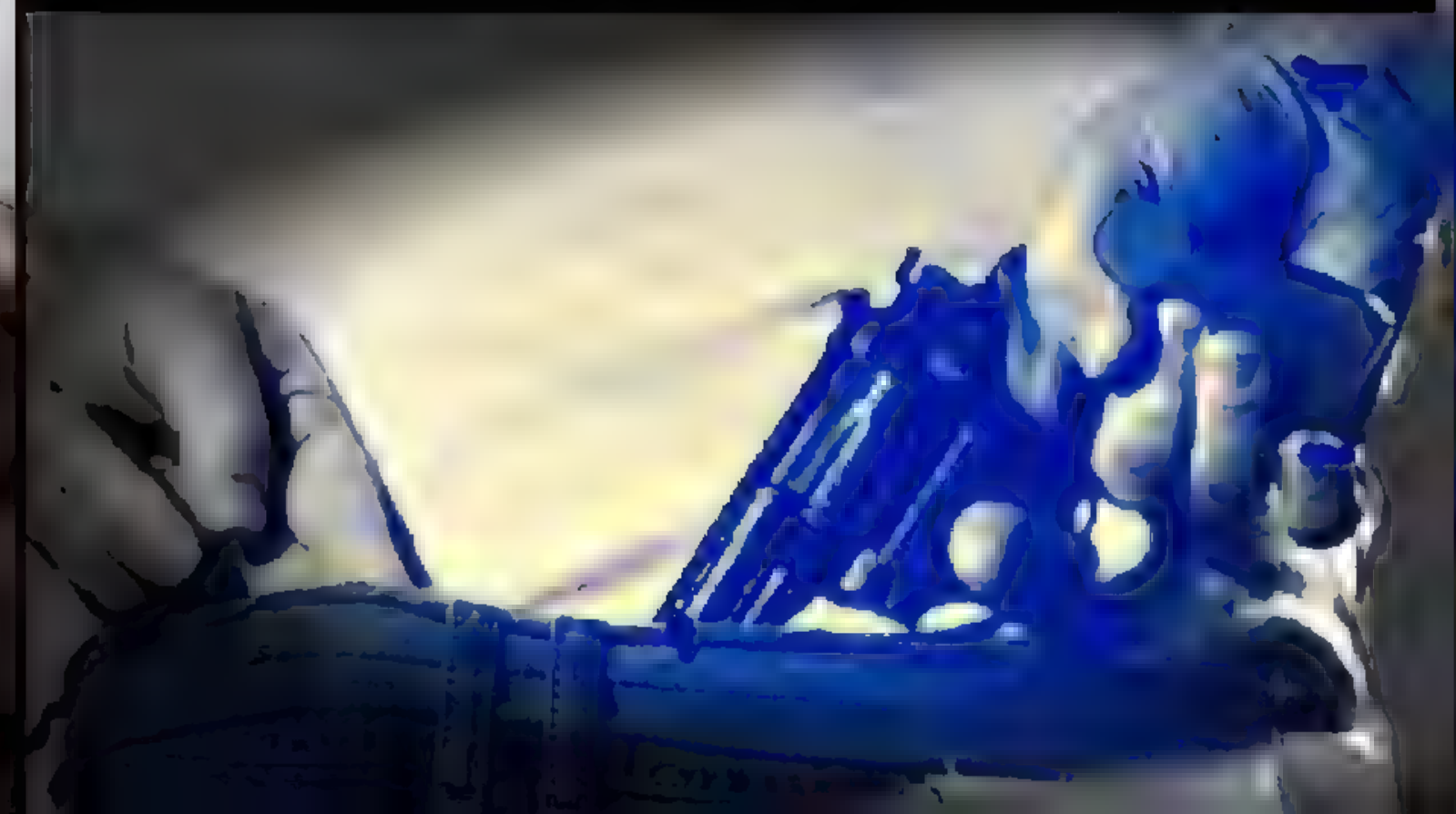


During the scuffle, Thax lifts Phil's revolver and palms it.

Then Phil got
punches him, hard.



Thax doubles over and
slips the pistol into his
pants.



Phil knees him in the face.

Enough!

Get in the car,
bull's-eye.

Okay, okay.
I've had enough.



You goddam well
better believe it or I'll
knock your teeth loose.



Bob covers Thax with a .38 while Chad
gets in.

Chad aims his .45 at Thax, then
turns to Bob.





Slow.
Let's not attract
attention.

I know my job, Chad.

Of course
you do.

What say
we stop somewhere, Chad?
I'd like to get a head start on
bull's-eye here.

Cut it out.



No
hard feelings,
Mister Thaxton,
just the way
it goes.



Do I just
get a beating
from pee-wee
here, or is it
serious?

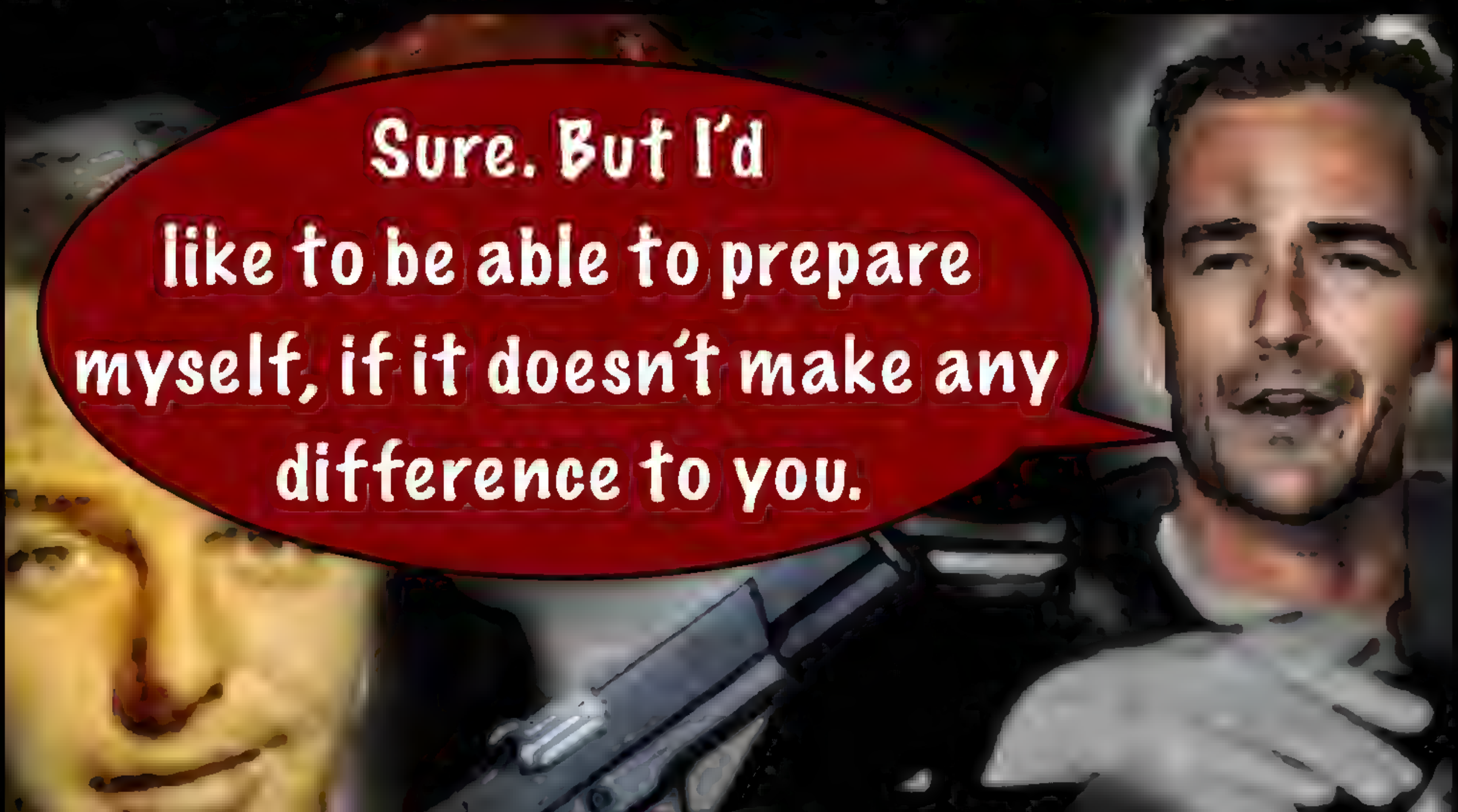
You're mine, bull's-eye.




I wouldn't
worry about
it, Mister
Thaxton.



One way or another
you've got to face it.



Sure. But I'd
like to be able to prepare
myself, if it doesn't make any
difference to you.



You're going to
die, Mister Thaxton. I
hope you'll take it like a
man and not make me
sorry I told you.



Who
hired you?

I thought you
wanted to prepare yourself. It
can't be a good thing to die with a
head full of bitter hatred and
futile recriminations.


A composite image featuring four men from the movie 'The Usual Suspects'. From left to right: Kevin Spacey as Detective Kujan, Kevin Spacey as Walter (smoking), Gabriel Byrne as Matt (smiling), and Morgan Freeman as Mr. Thaxton. A red speech bubble points to Walter, and a purple speech bubble points to Mr. Thaxton.

Look. There could be money
in this. Big money.

I'm afraid you're not very
astute, Mister Thaxton. Elimination and blackmail
are two divergent businesses. If you try to mix them,
you end up going bankrupt.



They turn off the main road.

A group of four men in suits are shown. The man on the far left is holding a handgun. A speech bubble is positioned above them.


What you
say, Chad? We have some fun with
him first, huh?

A close-up of the man holding the handgun. A speech bubble is next to him.

No.

A close-up of the man holding the handgun. A speech bubble is next to him.

Are
we
close?

A close-up of the man holding the handgun. A speech bubble is next to him.

Uh-huh. Any place
along here. Nearest development
is five miles.

A vintage car is parked on a dirt road at night. The car's headlights are on, illuminating the road ahead. In the background, a full moon hangs in the sky, and a large animal carcass is hanging from a tree branch. The scene is dark and atmospheric, with a blueish tint.

The car stops.

The headlight beams converge ahead, showing fifty yards of dirt road.



So. Right here, huh?

I did mention I was
sorry, didn't I?

Phil giggles, he opens the door, turns back to Chad.

Lemme square him
away, huh Chad?



Thax makes his move.

Anybody seen pee-wee's
pistol?

Phil slaps a hand to his empty shoulder holster.

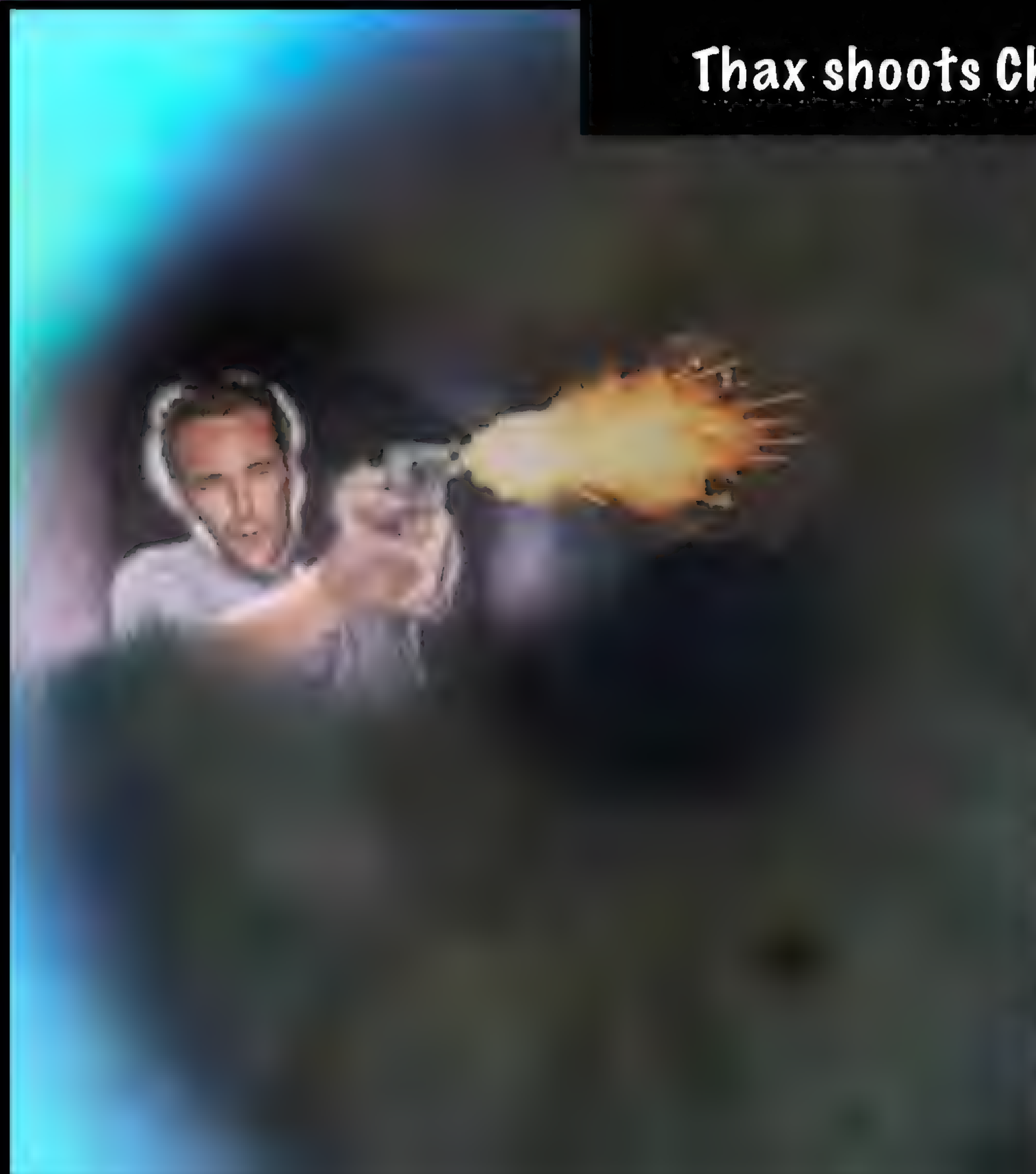


Thax draws the gun.

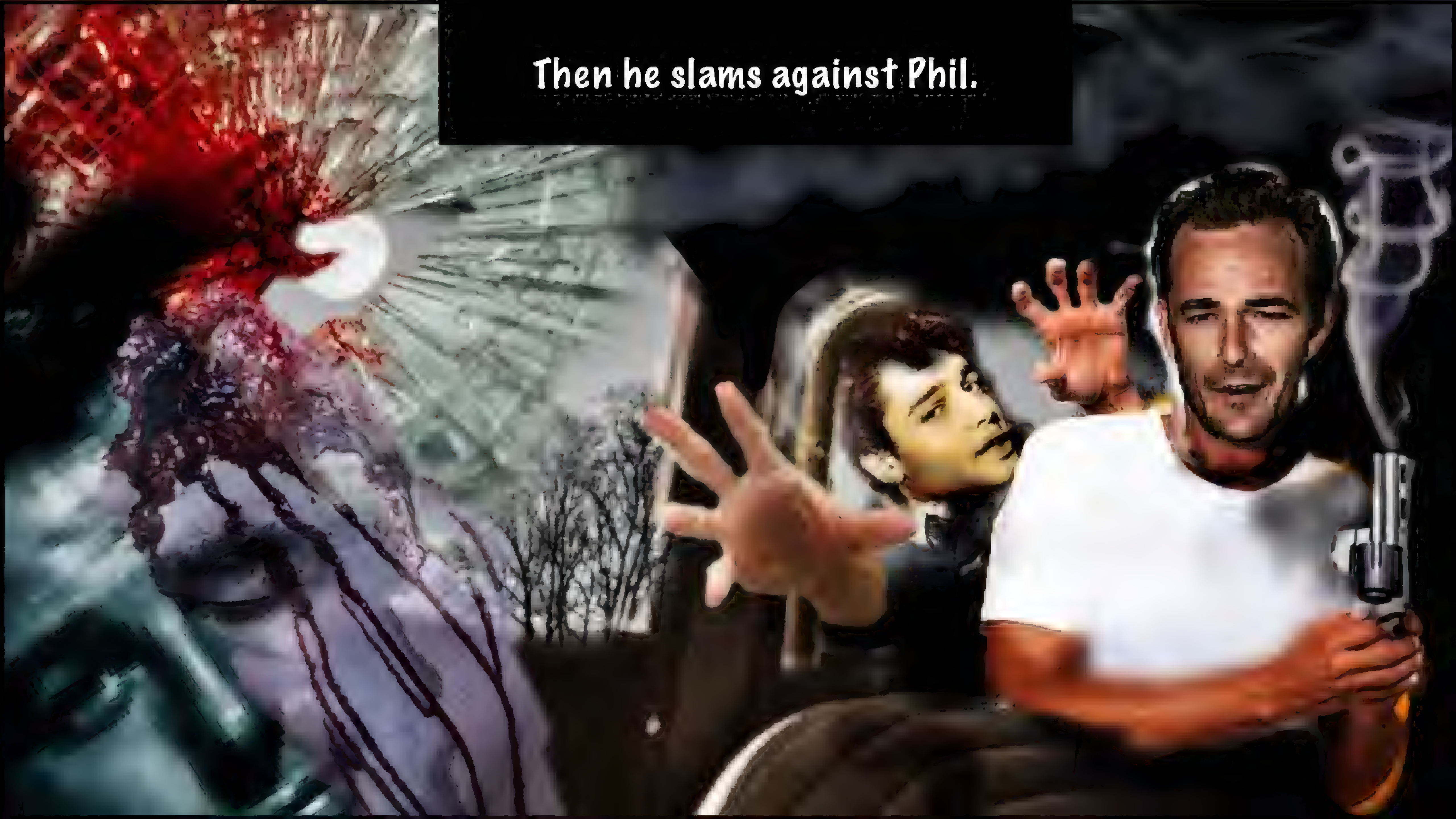
Chad's
eyes
follow
the gun.



Thax shoots Chad in the head.



Then he slams against Phil.





They fall out of the car
and roll onto the road.

Thax takes a
running jump
into the ditch.



Bob's gun goes POW-POW-POW out the window.

Take the
right side. I'll take
the left.

He must be
in the ditch.

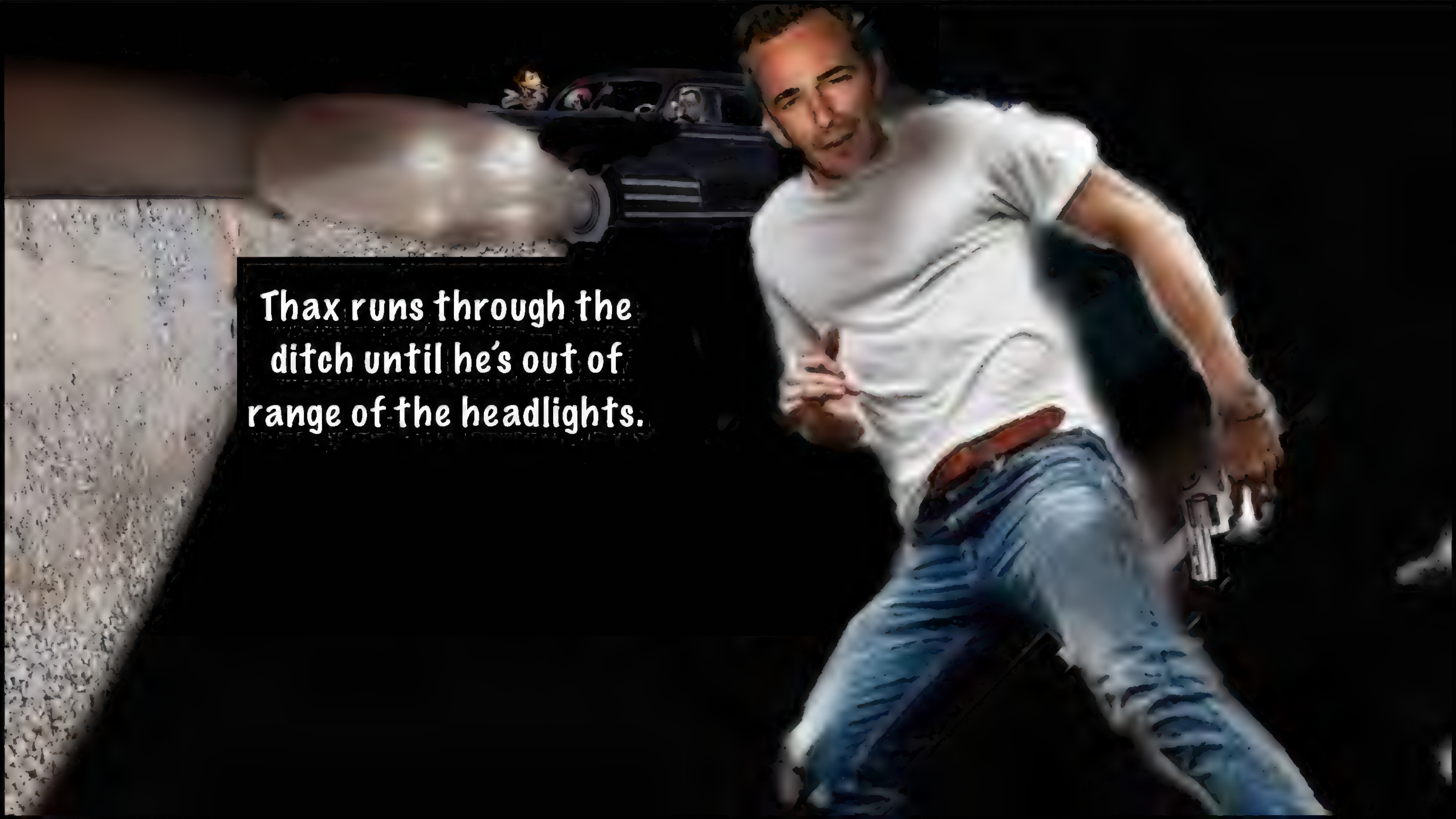




He's
mine, goddam
you Bob! You
hear me? Wait'll
I get Chad's
gun.



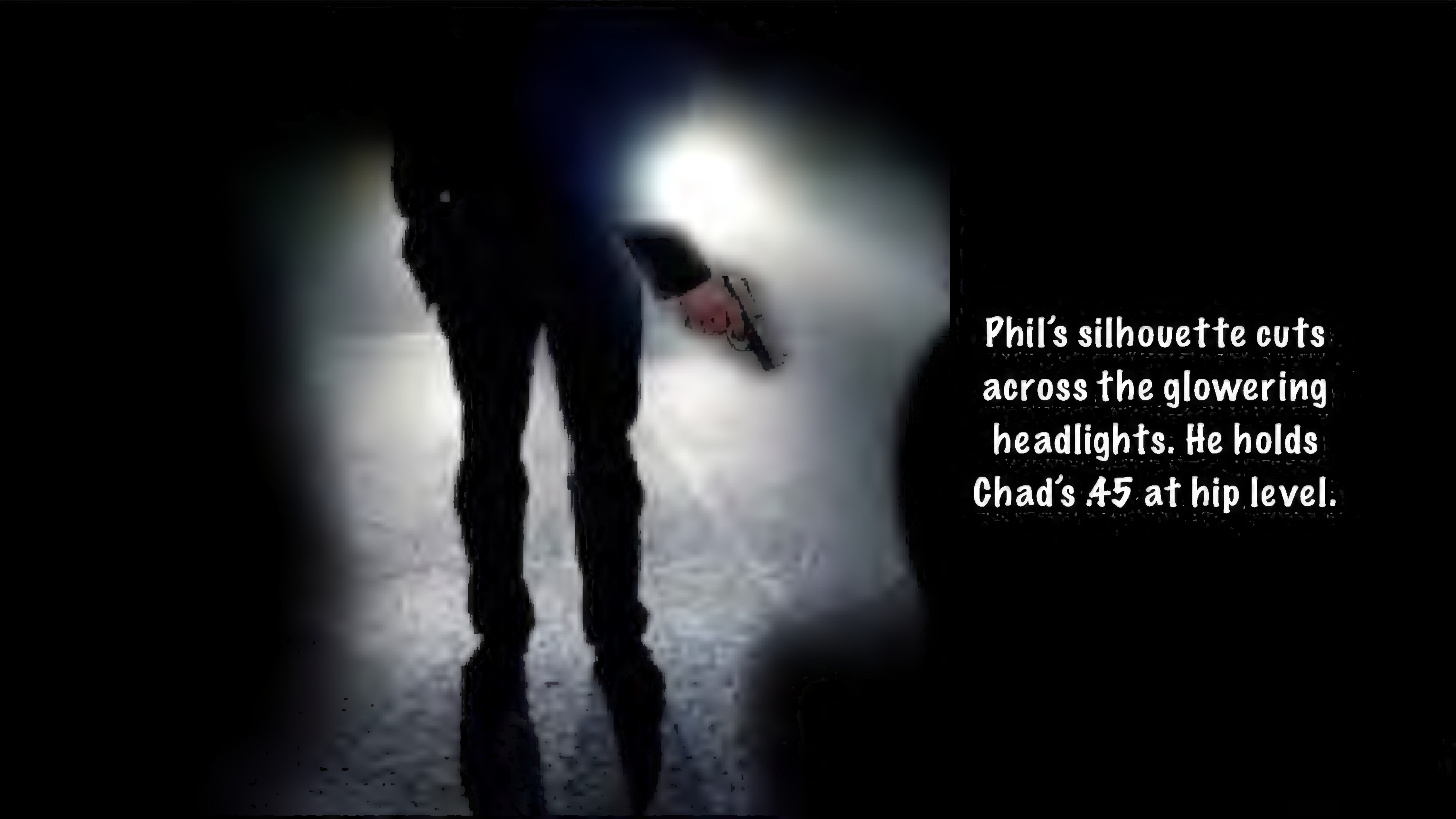
Aw Gee-sus, Bob! You see
what he done to Chad?

A man in a white t-shirt and blue jeans is running away from a car in a dark ditch at night. The car's headlights are shining on him. The man is holding a handgun in his right hand. The scene is dark and tense.

Thax runs through the
ditch until he's out of
range of the headlights.



Then he sneaks up to the edge of the ditch and looks back down the road.



Phil's silhouette cuts
across the glowering
headlights. He holds
Chad's .45 at hip level.

Thax rests the gun on his knees, takes careful aim and calls.

Down here.

Phil spins.

Thax SHOOTS!





Phil's knees buckle and he drops.



Bob piles back into the car.

The car lurches forward.

Jesus Christ!
Bob! WAAAAHH!!!



CRUNCH! The sedan bounces over Phil.



Bob is
rattled. He
stomps on
the gas and
the big sedan
comes
hurtling
down the
road.





Thax empties the pistol into the
oncoming windshield.



The car swerves out of control.

Thax takes a frantic roll back into the ditch.



The car flips.



Then the
tentative
SOUND of
ruptured
metal parts
and the
PLIPPETY-PLIP
of puddling
liquid.



Bob hangs
upside down
out the
window.
DEAD.



Thax goes down the road and finds Phil, hemorrhaging from the mouth.





Thax wipes down the pistol and pitches it into the ditch.

He starts
hoofing it
back the
way they
came.





2 AM: Thax sits in a diner drinking black coffee.



A taxi pulls up and honks.





Thax pays the cabbie and gets out.



Billie is getting ready for bed. She hears a knock on the door.

She
opens it
but
leaves
the
safety
chain
hooked.



Thax?

She undoes the
chain. He steps in.

I had some trouble.

What happened?



A man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is shown in profile, looking down with a somber expression. A red speech bubble is positioned above his head.

It was a car accident.

An elderly woman with short, curly white hair is shown from the chest up, looking forward with a questioning expression. A pink speech bubble is positioned to her right.

**Well, who's car?
Was anybody hurt?**

A man and a woman are shown in a dark, possibly indoor setting. The man, on the right, is wearing a white tank top and looking towards the woman. The woman, on the left, has blonde hair and is looking back at him. Two red speech bubbles are overlaid on the image. The first bubble, coming from the man, contains the text 'Nobody hurt, just three guys killed.' The second bubble, coming from the woman, contains the text 'Okay I use your bathroom? I feel dirty.'

Nobody hurt, just
three guys killed.


Okay I use your
bathroom?
I feel dirty.

Later.

Three
guys drove me out to a
deserted spot.

The whole thing seemed
twisted and formal.



A man with short dark hair and a mustache, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to his right with a serious expression. His right arm is raised, with his hand near his head. A red speech bubble with a black outline is positioned to the left of his head, containing white text. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some indistinct shapes that could be furniture or architectural elements.

The head guy
was courtly, I guess.
But there was no question
they were going to kill
me, right there.



What
happened?

They're dead. They're all
dead, Billie. I need a drink.

She goes
to the
kitchen,
pours him
some
whiskey.





Thax gulps
the booze.





Thax starts to shake and sweat.





He buries his face in her
breast like a child.

Billie turns out the lights.



She slips out of her nighty...

...and gets
into bed
beside him.





God, I need you.

They make love in a desperate, fever-sweat, kind of way.

I've got some
clean shirts and books and
stuff I'll pick up after we close
tonight and meet you at
the main gate.

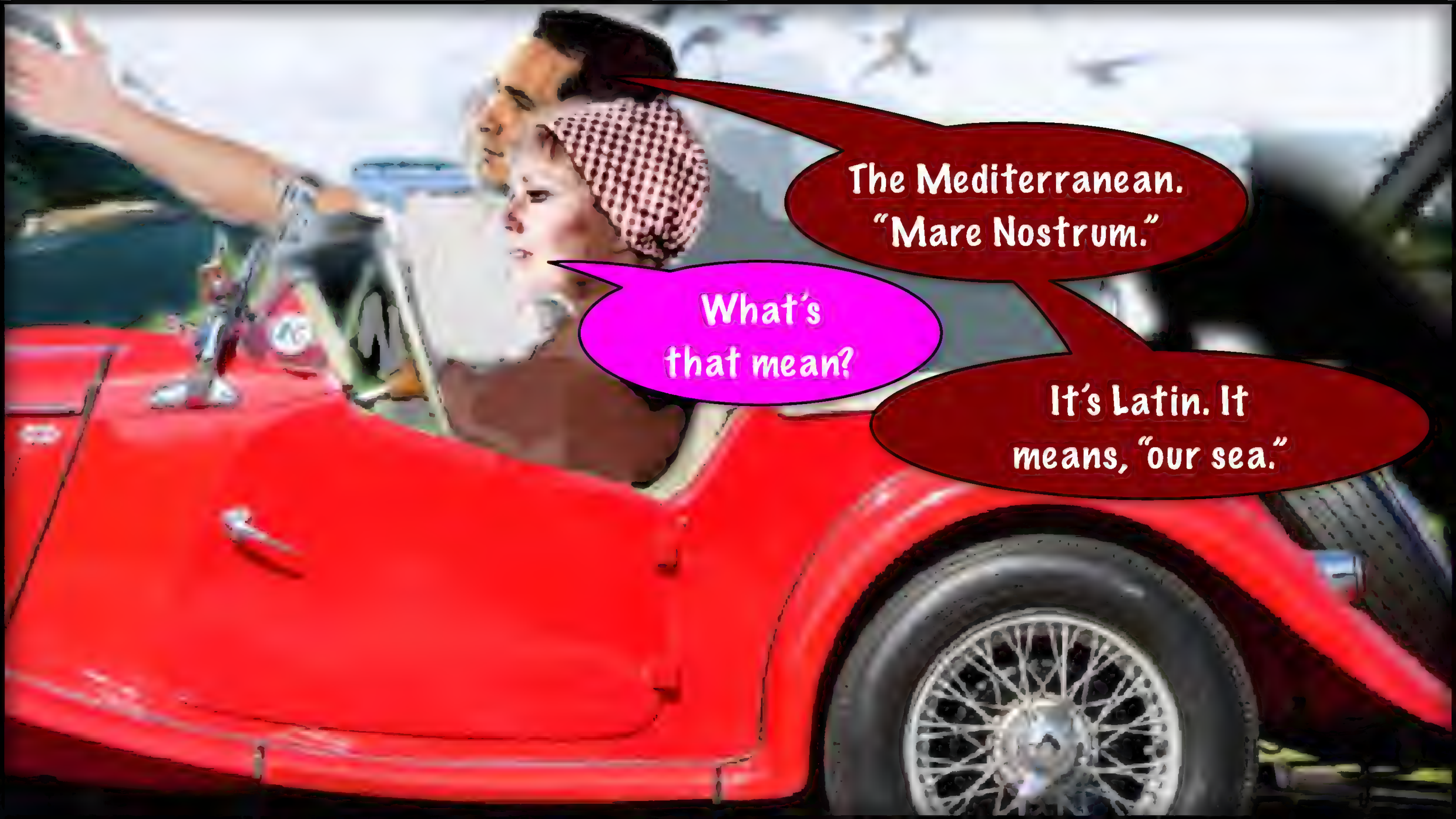
The next day.

A man and a woman are sitting in a red convertible car. The man is on the left, looking towards the right. The woman is on the right, looking towards the left. They are both wearing dark clothing. The car is red and has a black top. In the background, there is a cloudy sky with many birds flying. To the left, there is a building with a sign that says "NICE".

Thax, be
careful.
Don't trust
anyone.

I never do,
Billie.

We're
so close.



The Mediterranean.
"Mare Nostrum."

What's
that mean?

It's Latin. It
means, "our sea."

A hot sultry day.



Thax works his game for a while then takes a break.

He heads over to Gabby's joint.

Got a minute,
Gabby?

Sure.





Take a
little liquor
drink for the
heat?

No thanks. Let's
step around back.

They go
around
back to a
little
tented
area.



Gabby takes a
shot of rum from
his flask.

Why don't you
use your head, Thax?
Cut and run.

Can you help me
out, or not?

I ain't helping you out
any by giving you a gun.

A close-up, slightly blurred image of a man's face, looking downwards. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of his face.

So this gun
thing was just
bullshit?

A man with a concerned expression, wearing a white tank top, is shown from the chest up. He is positioned in front of a wooden structure. A green speech bubble is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

I got a forty-five put away...

Gabby enters a small shack.

He steps back out with a .45 automatic.

A man with a serious, slightly worried expression is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a white tank top and holding a dark-colored handgun in his right hand. The background is dark and indistinct.

...but you're a
sucker if you try to
use it.

Gabby doesn't look happy as
Thax takes the gun.



Thax checks the magazine.
It's loaded. He checks the
safety, then sticks it in his
belt.

Later that night,
Thax works his
shell game.



Across the way, Bill Duff gives him a peculiar stare.


Duff walks over.

Thax.

Bill.

You want an orchid?

Duff ignores Thax's wisecrack and gets to the point.



I've
been thinking,
Thax —

— that you and I are a
couple of dopes.



I'll go along
with half of that.

No. I'm
serious. We
been butting heads
when if we had any
brains, we'd be a
team.

Like the two-
headed calf in the
illusion show?

He gives Thax an aggrieved
but patient look.

You know
what I mean?

You mean
you think you have
a shot at laying your
hands on someone else's
money and I should
help you.

Thax rotates the walnut shells.

**You just
don't get it, do
you Bill?**

The background is a blurry, low-resolution image. On the left, a man with dark hair and a beard is wearing a white shirt. On the right, a close-up of a woman's face is visible, looking towards the left. The overall image has a soft, out-of-focus quality.

I get you come on acting all noble
and pure so you can keep the whole
score to yourself. I get that part.

Thax grabs Duff's shirt and pulls him close.



**The trouble with you,
Bill, is that you are a piece of crap,
and that you stink.**



**The Viking horn MOANS, breaking
the tension. Closing time.**

Thax shoves
Duff out
into the
midway
where he
collides
with a
tourist and
falls on his
ass.



Later, back at
Tarzan's
Treehouse...





Thax pulls out the cardboard box he keeps his shirts in.

A little piece of paper is
pinned to the top shirt.



He unpins it, holds it up and sees a black spot on the paper.

"But what
is the black spot,
captain?"

He opens his copy of Treasure Island.

TREASURE ISLAND

PAGE I

THE OLD BUCHANAN

CHAPTER I

THE OLD BUCHANAN

SQUIRE LAWNEY, of the T. having asked me to write
down the history of the island, keeping nothing back but
the truth, I have done so, and here is still treasure not yet
found, and go back to the time when
Admiral Benbow Inn, and the brown old seaman first took
under our roof.

looking round the
ing out in that old sea

to have been



Thax
thumbs
through
the pages
and finds
the quote.


“But what is the black spot, captain?” I asked.

“That’s a summons, mate. I’ll tell you if they

He reads from the page.

"That's a summons,
mate."

Thax closes the book.



He slips the .45 in his belt.

Nobody ever got the
best of Long John Silver, not
even Ben Gunn.



Thax rows to the Hispaniola.



He climbs aboard.

The cabin door flies open.



Hey, Thax! I've
been expecting you.

Thax holds out the black spot, makes a stab at a quote.

“Look here.
This ain’t lucky.
You’ve gone and cut a
bible. What
fool has cut a
bible?”

Mike laughs, takes the
black spot from Thax.

It really was cut
from a bible, Thax. I always keep one
around for laughs.



Mike gestures him in.

Thax scans the cabin suspiciously as he enters.



He sees a closet,
lodged in
the corner,
faced with
two
louvered
doors.

Care for
a drink?

No thanks. I'm
cutting down.

One door shifts slightly as he passes.

He sits in an open window frame.


What'd you put in
that rum, Mike?

FLASHBACK




A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a red shirt, is looking at a silver coffee machine. He is holding a small, dark, rectangular object in his right hand. A speech bubble is above him. In the background, there are shelves with various items, including a white box and some papers. The image has a stylized, slightly pixelated appearance.

I'm going to have
some coffee. You?



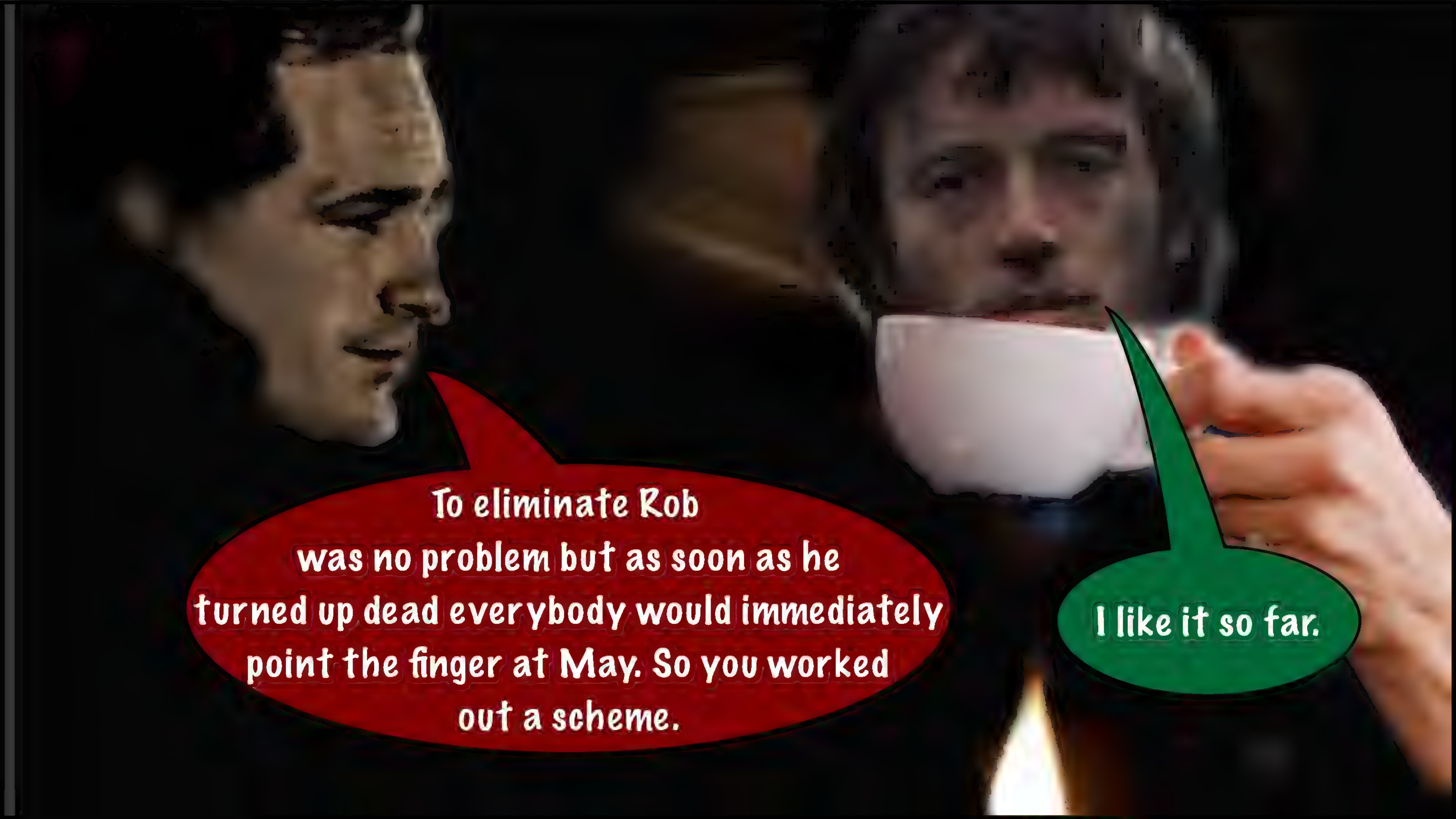
No? Well now,
why would I want to put
anything in your drink?

Because I bunked with
Terry Orme and because you
paid him a visit that night.

A man with dark hair and glasses is shown in profile, drinking from a white cup. He is wearing a dark jacket. A woman with dark hair is looking at him from the right. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some architectural details like a window with yellow trim.


You can tell a story
better than that, Thax.
You shouldn't start in the
middle you know, that's
cheating.

All right. I'll back up
to the beginning. You fell
for May-or-May and her
husband's dough.



To eliminate Rob
was no problem but as soon as he
turned up dead everybody would immediately
point the finger at May. So you worked
out a scheme.

I like it so far.



You murdered Cochrane and
framed May. But in such an obvious way that
even the cops would figure it out and start
looking for someone else.

And
then?



Then a midget
walked in, asking for
money.

You
kind of cued up the
midget too.

So you
doped me.

A man with a beard and mustache is shown from the chest up, pointing his right index finger upwards. He is looking towards a woman on the left, whose profile is visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Sodium
Amytal.**

**And killed
poor Terry.**

**They say
it leaves a
fairly clean
head.**

A man with a mustache and a woman are looking at a lit match. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. The match is in the center, held by the woman. There are three speech bubbles: a red one from the man, a green one from the woman, and a red one from the man again.

**Which
brings us to
bull's-eye.**

Who's that?

**Maybe May
didn't tell you.**



What about it, May?

The louvered
doors swing
open and May
steps out,
gripping one of
her knives.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black lace dress, is holding a knife and looking at a man. The man is in the foreground, looking up at her. The background is dark with louvered doors.

You think you're
so damned smart.

She turns to Mike.

He's got this
attitude, thinks
he's better than
everyone else.





You
wouldn't really
kill us would
you, Thax?

Afraid
you'd leave a
bloodstain on
your precious,
almighty,
goddamned
soul.

Thax's eyes are fixed on May's.

Did you
hear what I
said, May?

She raises the knife, about to throw it, when...



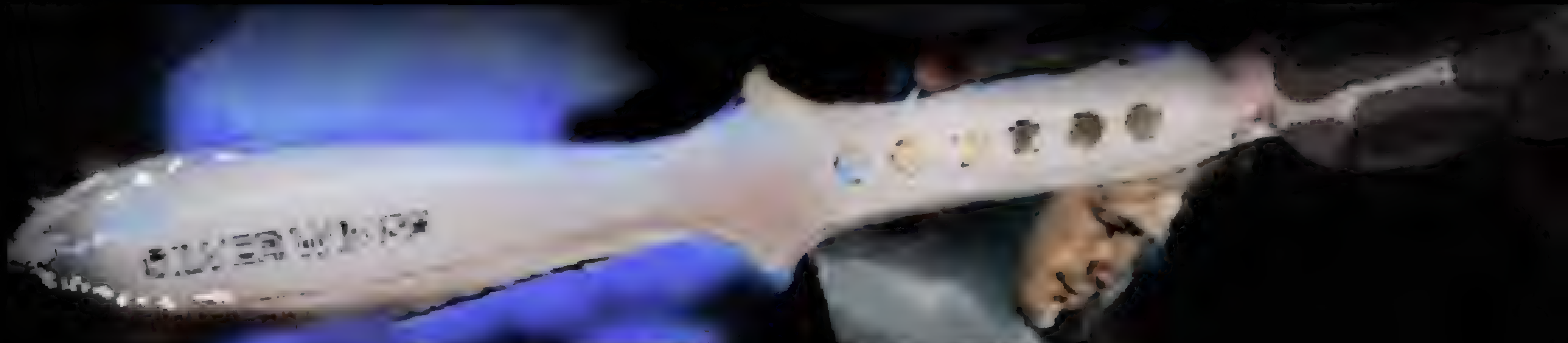
Thax pulls the trigger.

CLICK!!!!

"Wet powder,
Master 'Awkins?"

Mike grins.

May heaves the knife. Thax heaves his pistol.



The knife sticks in the sternpost.



Thax goes backwards...

...out the window.



He SPLASHES into the black shallows.



Mike stands at
the window
working the
knife free.





Thax slogs to shore, heading for cover.

Moving fast, he stumbles into a catclaw thicket.



Thax struggles to find an opening.




His hand touches something alive.

Thax springs back and crouches.

A long silence, then...

A SHRILL CRY! Thax jumps.



The image is a composite of three distinct scenes. The central, largest scene shows a man with light-colored hair and a surprised expression, shirtless and wearing dark shorts, holding a large, curved knife. He is in a dynamic, lunging pose. To the right, a smaller inset shows a man with dark hair lying in a nest of dry grass and twigs, looking up with a surprised expression. On the left side, there are three large, detailed feathers with dark and light brown patterns, arranged vertically. The overall background is dark and textured.

Mike leaps forward,
missing Thax who whirls
to track him then
crouches again.

They wait, silence.

Thax feels the
ground, groping
for a weapon
and settles for
a handful of
dirt.



A BRIGHT FLASH OF LIGHT!



Thax is blinded until his eyes adjust.

He sees Mike, standing six feet away,
who quotes from Treasure Island.

"Jim, I reckon we're fouled you and
me and we'll have to sign articles."



Mike cuts the light and pounces.



Thax chucks his handful of dirt in Mike's face then ducks.





Mike flies over him.

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Thax is up and going. Mike crashes through the underbrush.



Thax breaks through an opening and starts running.



Mike scrambles behind him.



Thax slams into a tree. THUD!

A man in a white shirt is running from left to right across the frame. He is looking back over his shoulder with a concerned expression. In the background, a man in a blue shirt is standing and watching him. The man in the blue shirt has a shocked or gasping expression on his face. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

Mike runs past him, missing the tree.

Then a GASP!

A person is lying on their back on a dark, textured surface, possibly a car floor. They are wearing a dark, patterned shirt and dark pants. Their arms are outstretched, and their legs are slightly bent. A large, stylized Japanese text overlay is positioned diagonally across the right side of the image. The text is written in a bold, brush-stroke style, with the first character in red and the rest in yellow. The background is dark and grainy, with some light reflecting off the person's skin and the surface they are lying on.

泣き叫ぶ

Finally, a guttural CRY!

Thax takes a cautious step forward.

A black hole looms in the darkness below.



He climbs down into Flint's Treasure pit.



Mike Ransome is there
too, face down.

Flint's

ASURE

Ultrus

Thax rolls him over.



He pries the lighter from
Mike's fist, and strikes it.





The light sparks in Mike's
vacant eyes, staring
somewhere far away.

May's knife is stuck in his heart.






Back in
the cabin,
May
paces
through a
gray
garland
of
cigarette
smoke.



When Thax opens the cabin door, she comes to an abrupt stop.


Sit down, May.





He's dead, May. He
fell on your knife.

You filthy
bastard.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black jacket over a white top, is looking towards a man in a dark suit. The man is partially visible on the right side of the frame, looking down. A red speech bubble is positioned between them, containing the text:

I wouldn't lie
to you now, May. It
was an accident.

She sits down all at once, ignoring the cigarette burning her fingers.

I loved him.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black dress, is seated at a table. She is looking towards a man who is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The man is wearing a dark suit and a white shirt. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting like a restaurant or a bar. A speech bubble is positioned above the woman, containing the text "I loved him."

Thax picks up Gabby's pistol.



He shoves it into his belt.



A composite image featuring a woman with long dark hair and a man with short dark hair. The woman is on the left, wearing a black lace-trimmed dress, and the man is on the right, wearing a black t-shirt. They are both looking towards the center. Overlaid on the image are several speech bubbles in red and yellow. The background is a dark, textured grey.

Why did you have to come here?

What
are you going
to do?

Tell Ferris.

He won't
believe you.

I think
he will.

Coincidence,
May.



Should I
run, Thax?

It's too late
to run. Besides, it
doesn't really matter
now, does it?



No, I guess
it doesn't.

She drops the cigarette.

Thax
closes
the cabin
door
quietly
behind
him.





He leaves May alone in the darkness.

He rows back to the dock. The moon
comes out from behind the clouds.



At the Dreamland
power plant, smoke
pours from the
chimney stacks.



Inside, Thax undresses in the hellish
light of the trash furnace and hangs
his clothes up to dry.





In the bunkhouse, a few drunks are snoring, sleeping it off in the darkness.

CLICK! Thax turns on the light.



He picks up the pay phone, feeds it, dials.



Hello.

Ferris is on the phone with Thax.

Yeah, so
then Ransome
accidentally falls on
his own knife.
Uh-huh.

And how did your
ex-wife accidentally kill
herself?

She didn't, she's
still out there.

Ferris' partner Iturbi is in bed with him.

Jesus! You just walked off and left her there?



A composite image with a warm, brownish-gold background. On the right side, there is a close-up, slightly out-of-focus portrait of a man with light skin and green eyes, looking directly at the viewer. On the left side, there is a vintage rotary telephone. The dial is white with black numbers, and the year '1957' is printed in the center. A hand is visible, holding the black telephone receiver. Overlaid on the center of the image is a large, red speech bubble with a black outline. Inside the bubble, the text 'She can't swim.' is written in a white, serif font.

She can't swim.




Did it ever
occur to you she might
commit suicide?



She won't.

Thaxton! I'll be
out there as quick as I can find
my pants and a squad car. You stay
put. Hear me? You and I are going
to have a long talk.

I've still got a
couple of things to
take care of.

A close-up shot of a man with a mustache looking at a rotary phone. The phone is a black and silver model with a circular dial featuring the year '1957'. The man's expression is one of frustration or anger.

Goddammit,
Thaxton, I said stay
where you are!

Thax hangs up.

One of the bunkhouse drunks wakes up.

A scene from a movie showing a man in a bunkhouse. He is looking at a light bulb that is hanging from the ceiling. The room is dimly lit, and there are bunk beds in the background. A speech bubble is coming from the man, indicating he is annoyed by the light.

Hey! Turn that
stinking light off.

Thax walks over and slaps him
hard. The man passes out.



Dracula's Castle basement.



Thax descends the stairs.



Gabby steps out of the gambling den.

Thax hands him the forty-five.

You better replace the
firing pin.

Are they
dead?



Mike is, and
the cops are
coming for
May.

Forgive
me, Thax.



Why, Gabby? Why
did you do it?

They had me in a bind.
About four years back...

...me and May worked
for the same outfit.

There was a
beef one night and a mark got killed.
I sapped too hard.



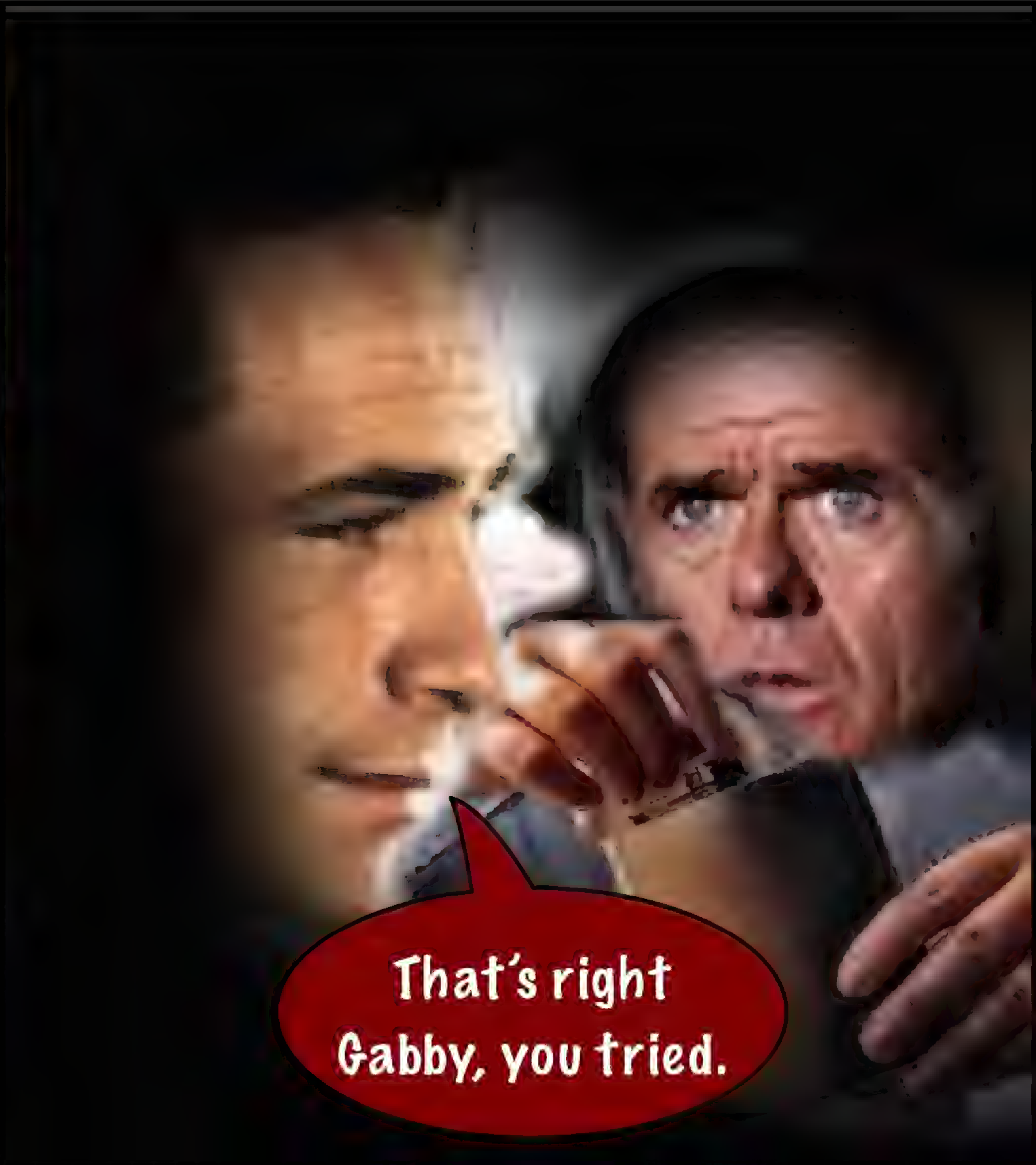
A few
of the carnies knew I
did it but they figured he
had it coming.

May was
one of them.



Who told them I was
looking for a gun?

Mike did.
He figured you'd
come to me, said it
was all part of a big
joke they was gonna
pull on you and I
better play along
or else.



He turns away...

It doesn't
matter now.

...and climbs the twisted stairs.



Thax enters Dracula's bedroom.

He throws himself on the bed.



His eyes close to the sounds of **WAILING SIRENS** below.

He dreams.











Thax. Thax...




Billie stands over him, holding a suitcase.

Wake up Thax.



He opens his eyes. Daylight.



A composite image featuring two identical portraits of a woman with short, curly blonde hair and a dark choker. The portraits are set against a dark, textured background. A bright pink speech bubble originates from the woman on the left, and another pink speech bubble points towards the woman on the right.

Thax, I've been looking
everywhere for you! And
so have the police.

How long have
you been up here?



What time
is it.

It's nearly nine.
Thax, there's police all
over the place.

Do you have a
cigarette?

She sits down on the bed, gives
him one from her purse.

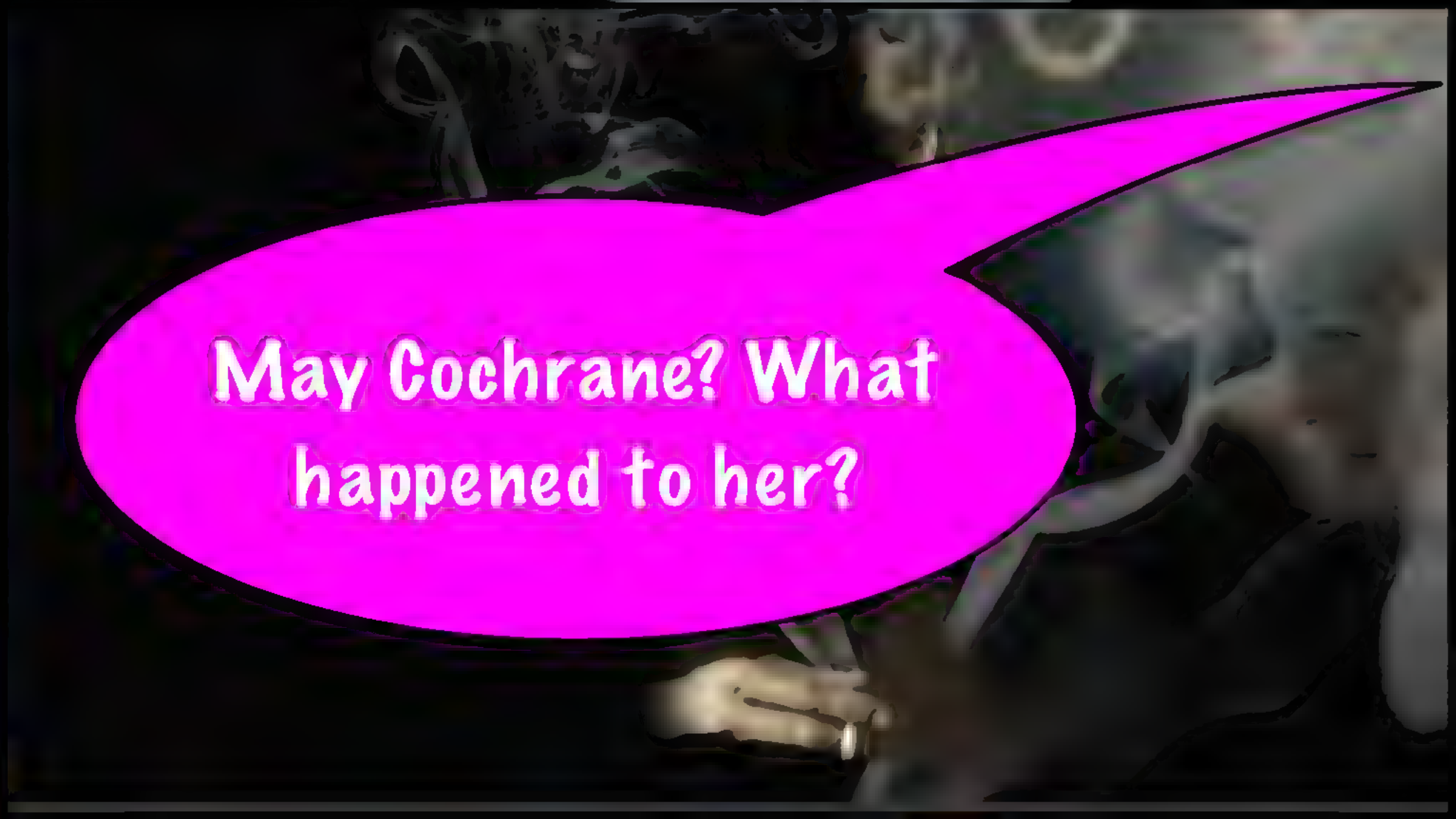
A man in a dark suit is lighting a cigarette with a lighter. A woman with blonde hair is looking at him. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Thax, they're saying Mike
Ransome was killed last night.

That's right, he had an accident
and fell on one of May's knives.



**May Cochrane? What
happened to her?**






She's still alive,
as far as I know.

I don't understand,
honey. What...

Billie makes an impatient
little shake with her head.


A man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, is shown in profile, looking down and holding a lit cigarette in his mouth. Behind him, a woman with short blonde hair is looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus. A large red speech bubble is on the left, and a smaller pink speech bubble is on the right.

**Mike and May killed Rob
Cochrane for the money. Orme
saw the whole thing and tried
for blackmail.**

**You mean Terry
was a witness?**

A man and a woman are in a bathtub. The man is on the left, looking towards the woman. The woman is on the right, looking towards the camera. A red speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "That's right, Billie, but you knew that." The background is a dark, textured wall.

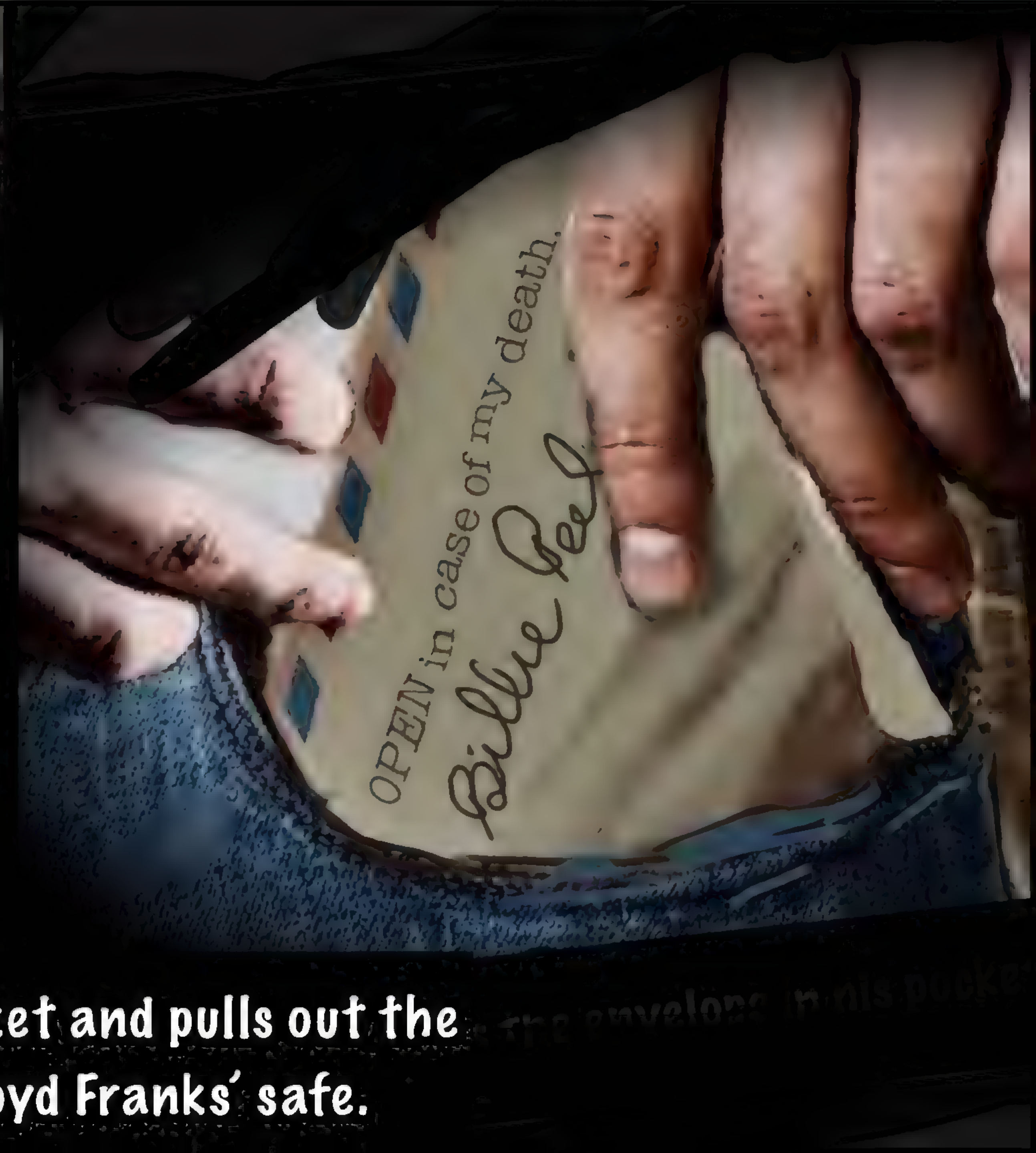
That's
right, Billie,
but you knew
that.

A woman with blonde, curly hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a black, sleeveless dress. She has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

That isn't
funny, Thax.

A close-up shot of a hand holding a lit cigarette. The hand is positioned as if about to light something. The background is dark and blurry.

People
always say that,
but it's bullshit.



He reaches in his pocket and pulls out the envelope from Lloyd Franks' safe.




He
hands
it to
her.



She puts it in her purse.



**Terry knew about May and Mike
shacking up, and he saw Mike dump Cochrane in
the swamp.**

A man in a dark suit is shown in profile, looking towards a woman in a white dress who is standing in the background. The setting is dark and industrial, with various pipes and structures visible. The man's expression is serious. The woman is looking back at him. The overall tone is dramatic and mysterious.

But he
needed someone he
trusted to deal with
the practical side
of things.

Someone like you.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black sleeveless dress, is seated at a table. She is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. Her hands are resting on the table in front of her. The background is dark and out of focus.

Billie drops her
act and comes to
the point.


A large, bright pink speech bubble with a black outline. It has a long tail pointing towards the woman's mouth.

I have five
hundred thousand
dollars, Thax.

A man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a white button-down shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is holding a black mobile phone to his ear with his right hand and looking slightly to the side with a concerned or questioning expression.

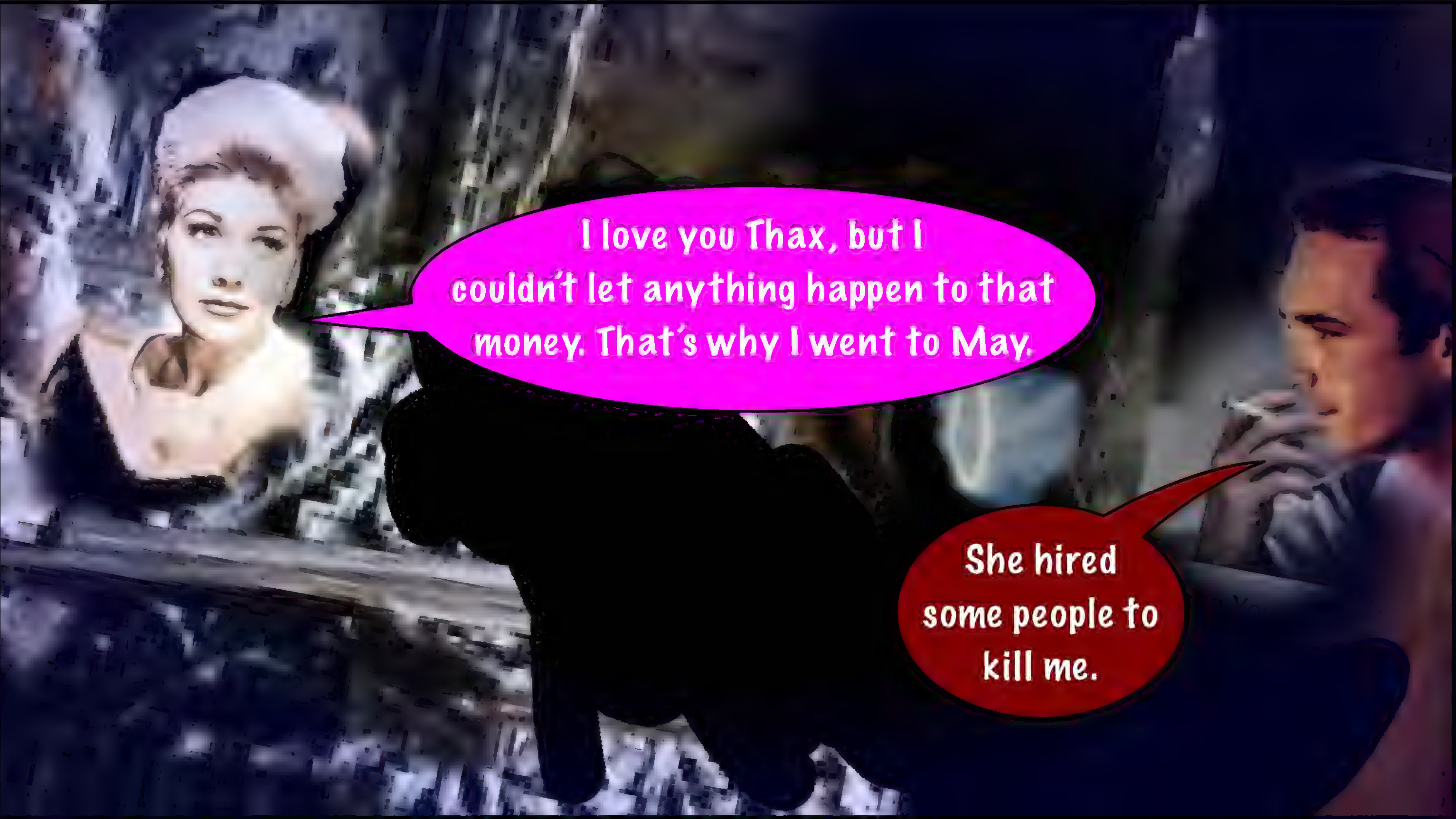
Cash?



A man and a woman are shown in a room. The man is in the foreground, looking towards the woman. The woman is in the background, looking back at him. A pink speech bubble is positioned between them, and a red speech bubble is at the bottom left. A stained glass window is visible on the right side of the image.


We're clean.
No one has anything
on us. We didn't
murder anyone.

Billie, May didn't know I
was on to her and Ransome until
someone told her.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black dress, is looking out from a balcony. She is holding a cigarette in her right hand. The background is a cityscape with tall buildings.

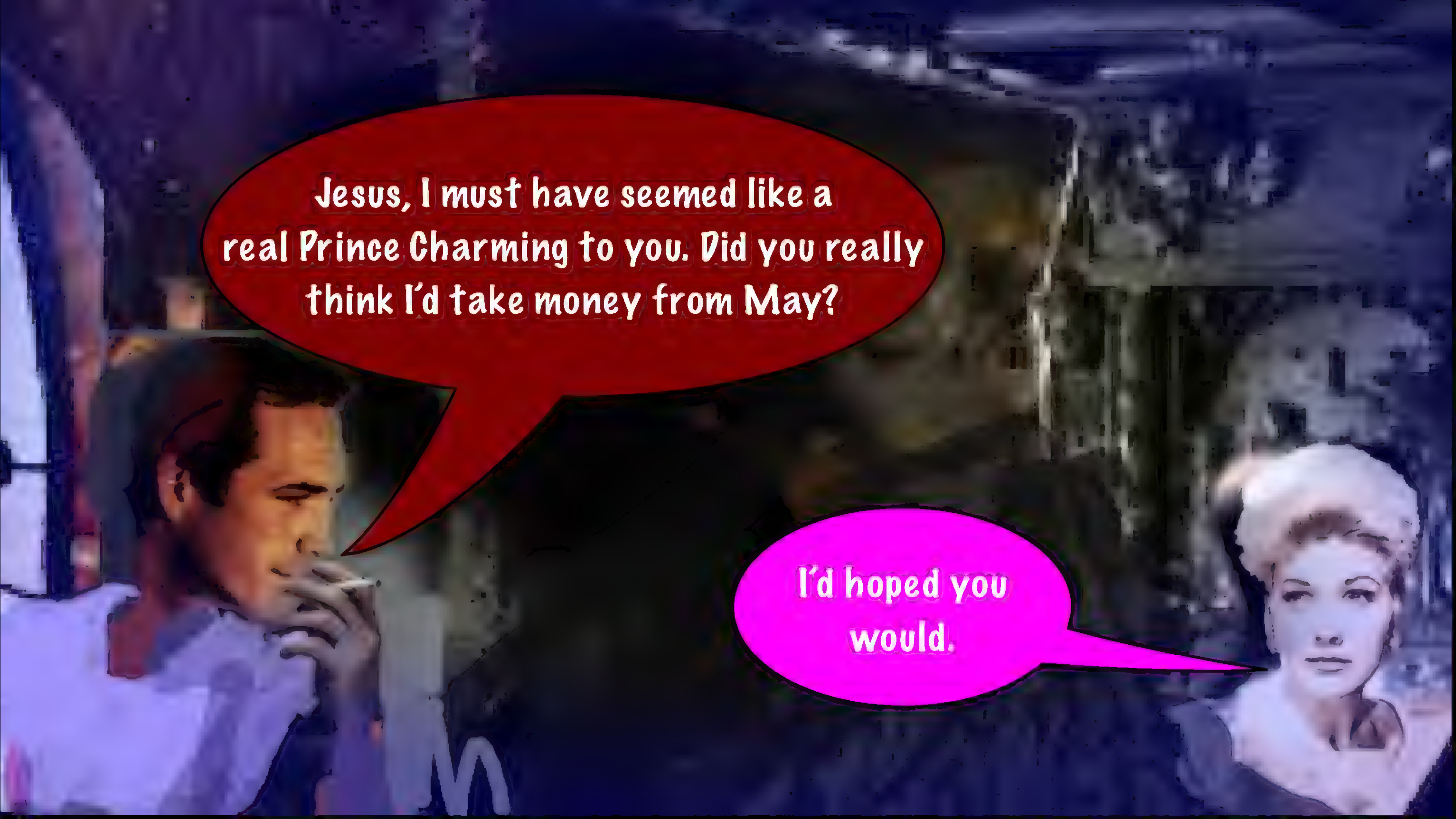
I love you Thax, but I
couldn't let anything happen to that
money. That's why I went to May.

She hired
some people to
kill me.

A woman with blonde hair is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark, possibly black, garment. The background is dark and out of focus, showing the silhouettes of city buildings. A large, bright yellow speech bubble is positioned on the left side of the frame, containing text. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

I never dreamed
she'd do anything like that. I
thought she'd try to buy you off. I
thought you'd be reasonable,
and take the money.

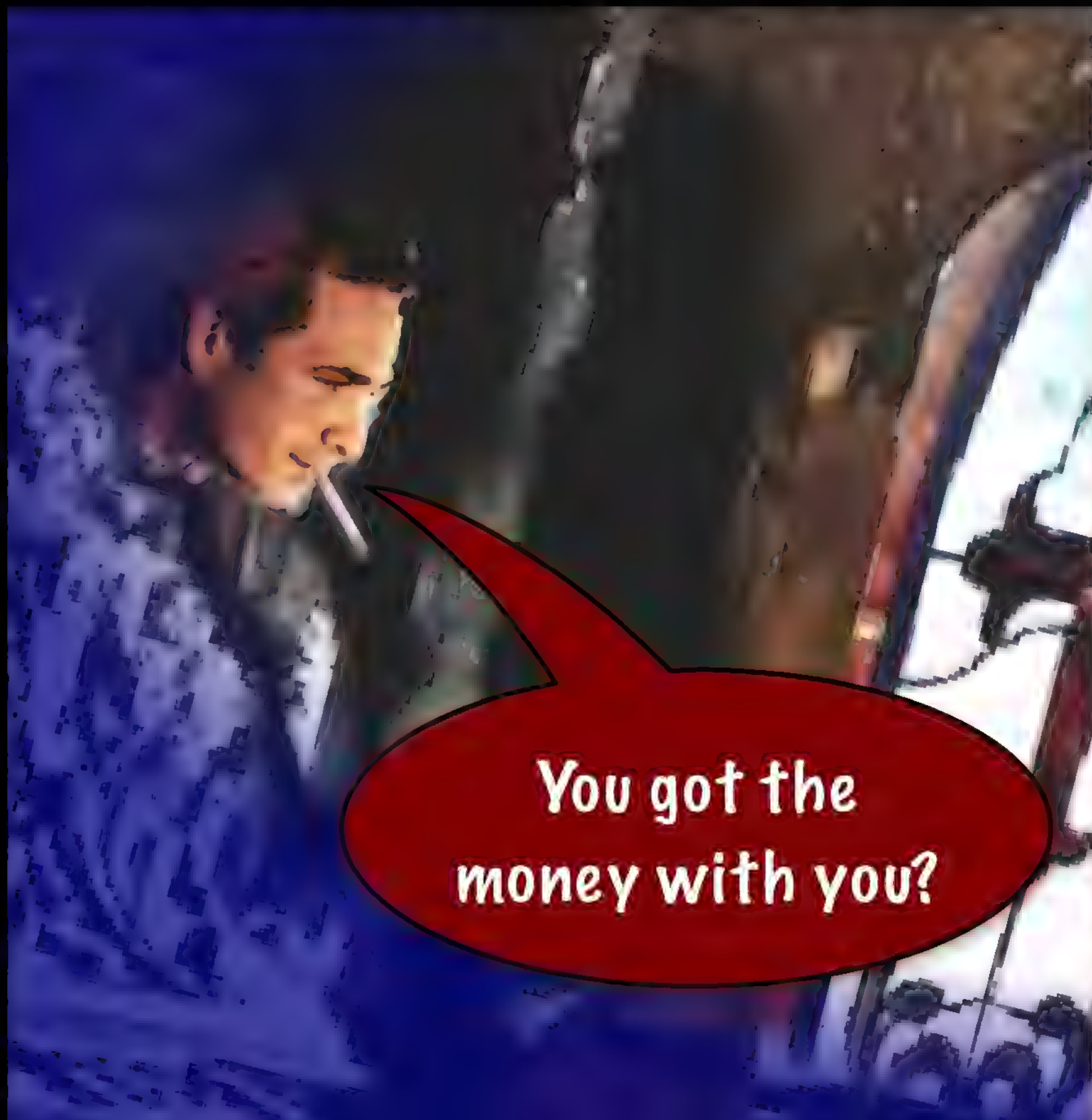
Her voice trails off. Her eyes go moist.

A man and a woman are shown in a city at night. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark jacket and a white shirt, and is holding a lit cigarette. The woman, on the right, is wearing a dark dress. They are both looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred city street with lights and buildings. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image. The first speech bubble is red and contains the text: "Jesus, I must have seemed like a real Prince Charming to you. Did you really think I'd take money from May?". The second speech bubble is yellow and contains the text: "I'd hoped you would.".

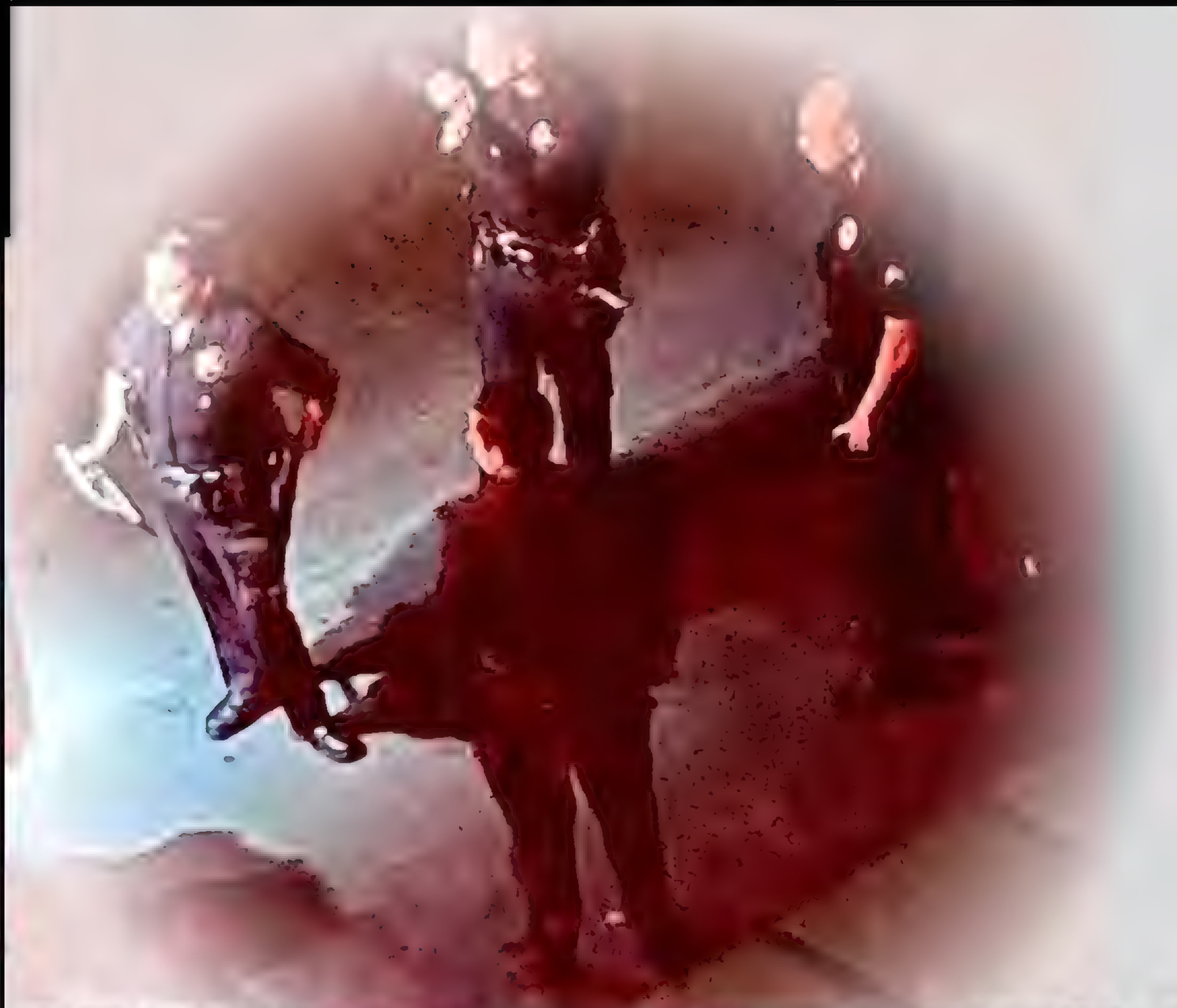
Jesus, I must have seemed like a
real Prince Charming to you. Did you really
think I'd take money from May?

I'd hoped you
would.

Thax walks to the window and
looks down at Dreamland.



You got the
money with you?




Three or four cops scurry about below.

She picks up her suitcase.



Thax turns back to her. He looks dead.





You'd better
take your money and run
with it, just as fast and far
as you can go.

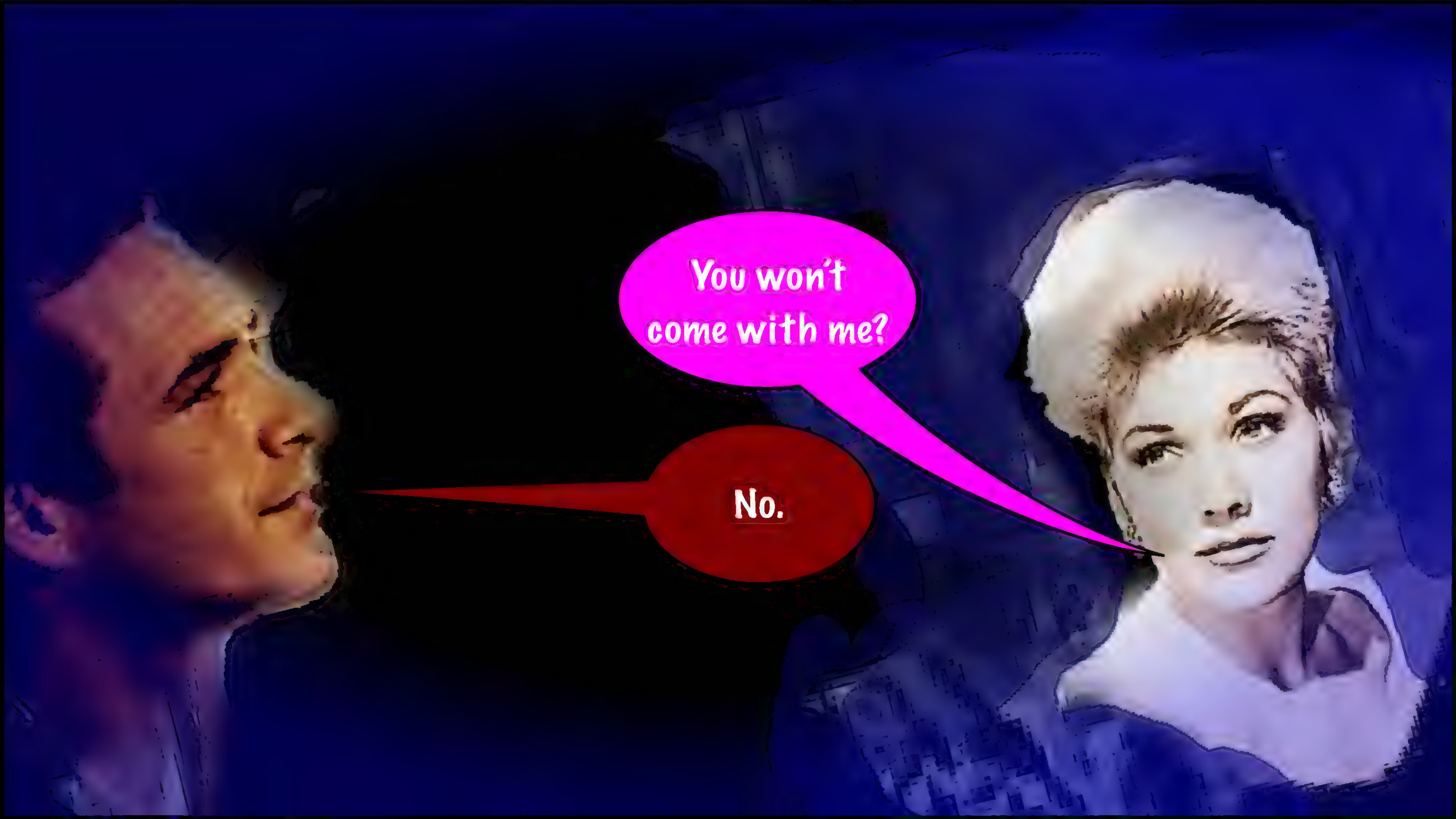


And if you're lucky...



...maybe you'll
even reach the
Mediterranean.





You won't
come with me?

No.

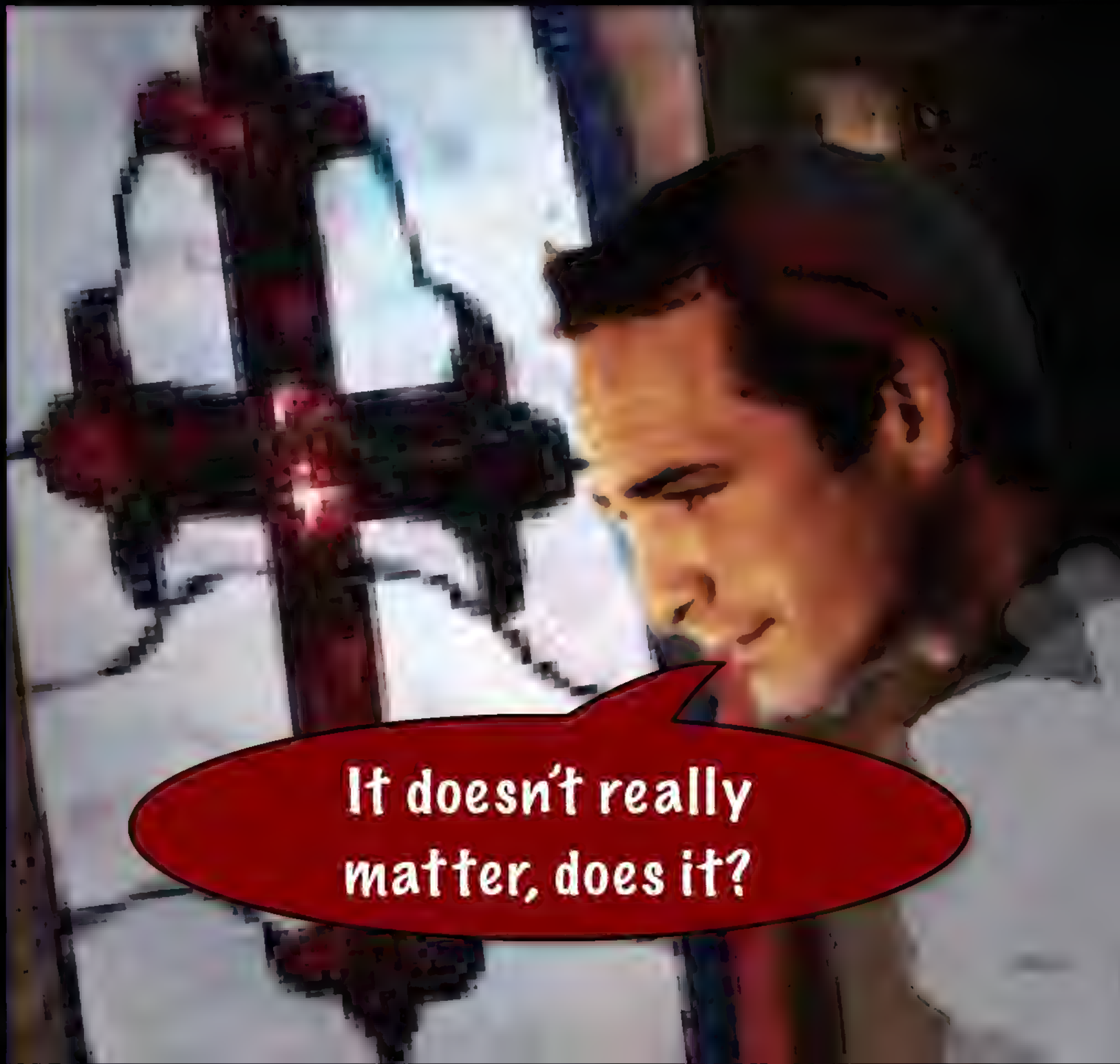


Down below, the cops take
May away in handcuffs.

Be honest with yourself,
Thax. If you stay you'll never be
anything but a carny bum.



He turns back to the window.



It doesn't really
matter, does it?

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black dress, stands in a field. In the foreground, the profile of a man's face is visible on the left. A large pink speech bubble points from the woman, and a red speech bubble points from the man.

Yes it does! If you'd
come with me we could...

You'd
better start
now, Billie.

She stands,
glaring at Thax.
Then she seems
to surrender, to
relax.

A close-up of the woman's face. She has blonde hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. A pink speech bubble points from her mouth.

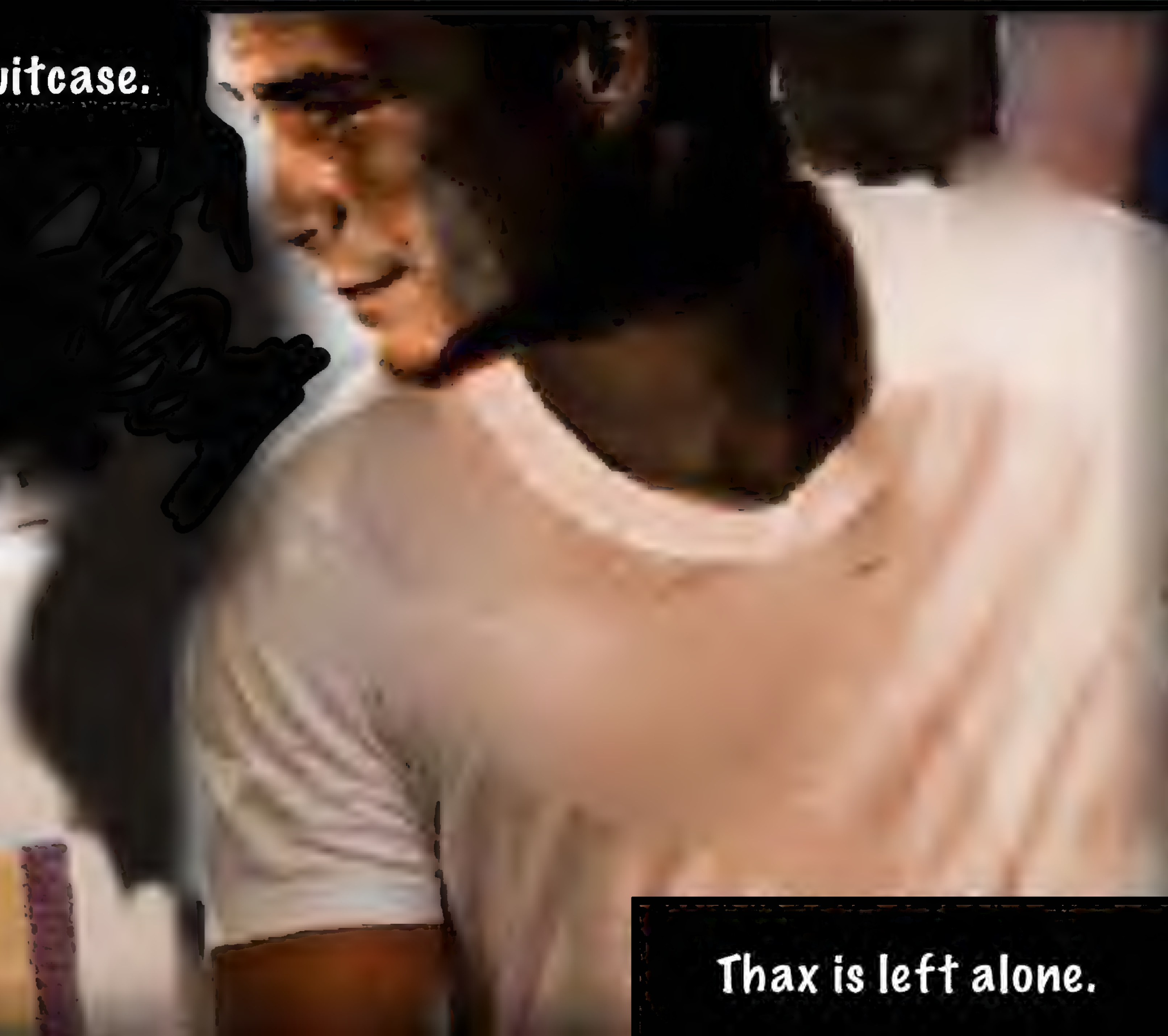
Maybe
you're right.



She reaches in her purse, brings out a pack of cigarettes and some matches, tosses them on the bed.



She turns and picks up her suitcase.

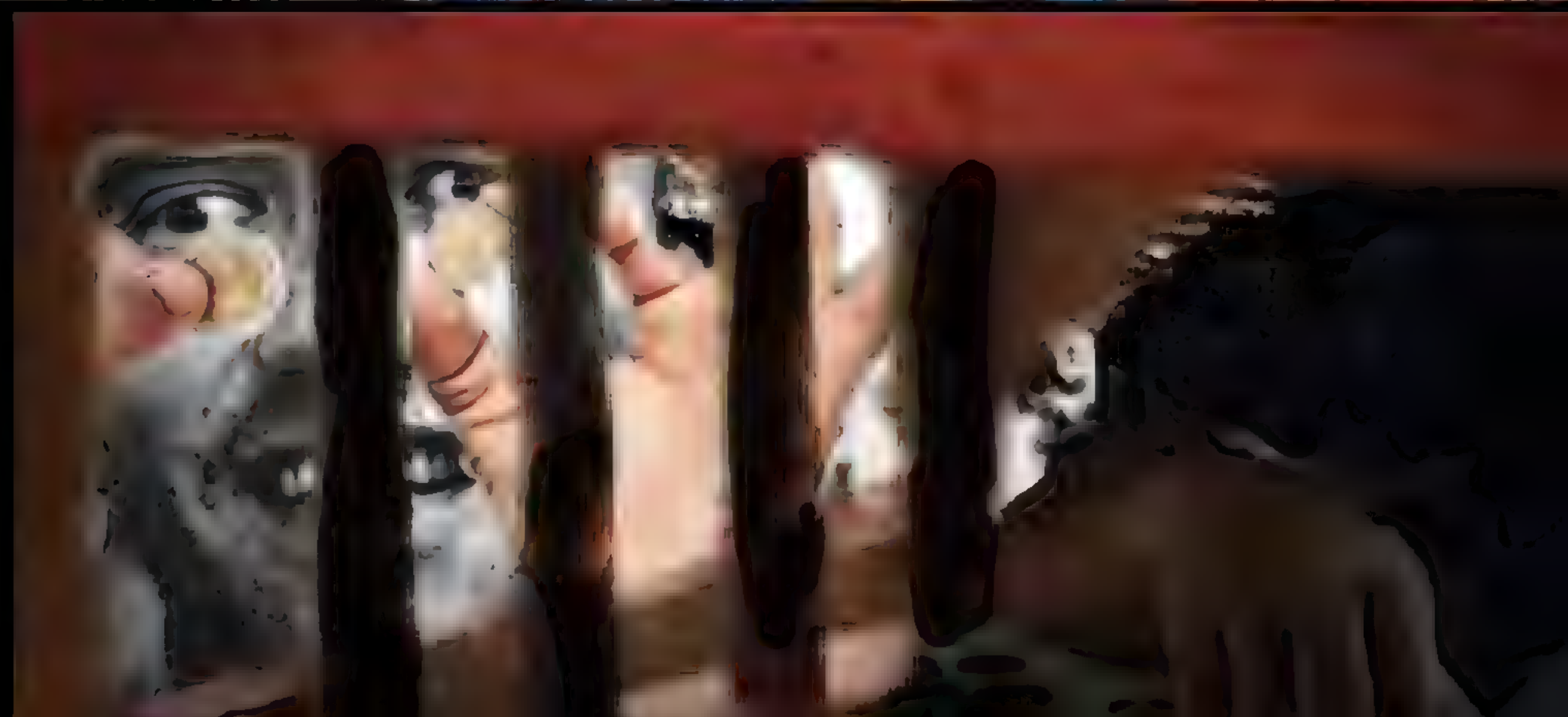


Thax is left alone.

The sound of her heels go click-clacking down the stairs.



Thax walks
out into the
bright
strength of
a new day.





The first influx of marks wander onto the lot.

Gabby spots Thax. A look of shame crosses his face.



Thax waves at Gabby.



Gabby reacts, uncertainly.

Bill Duff is on his bally, spieling.



Alive! Alive!
On the inside!

He spots Thax.



They exchange a blank glance.

Back at work.



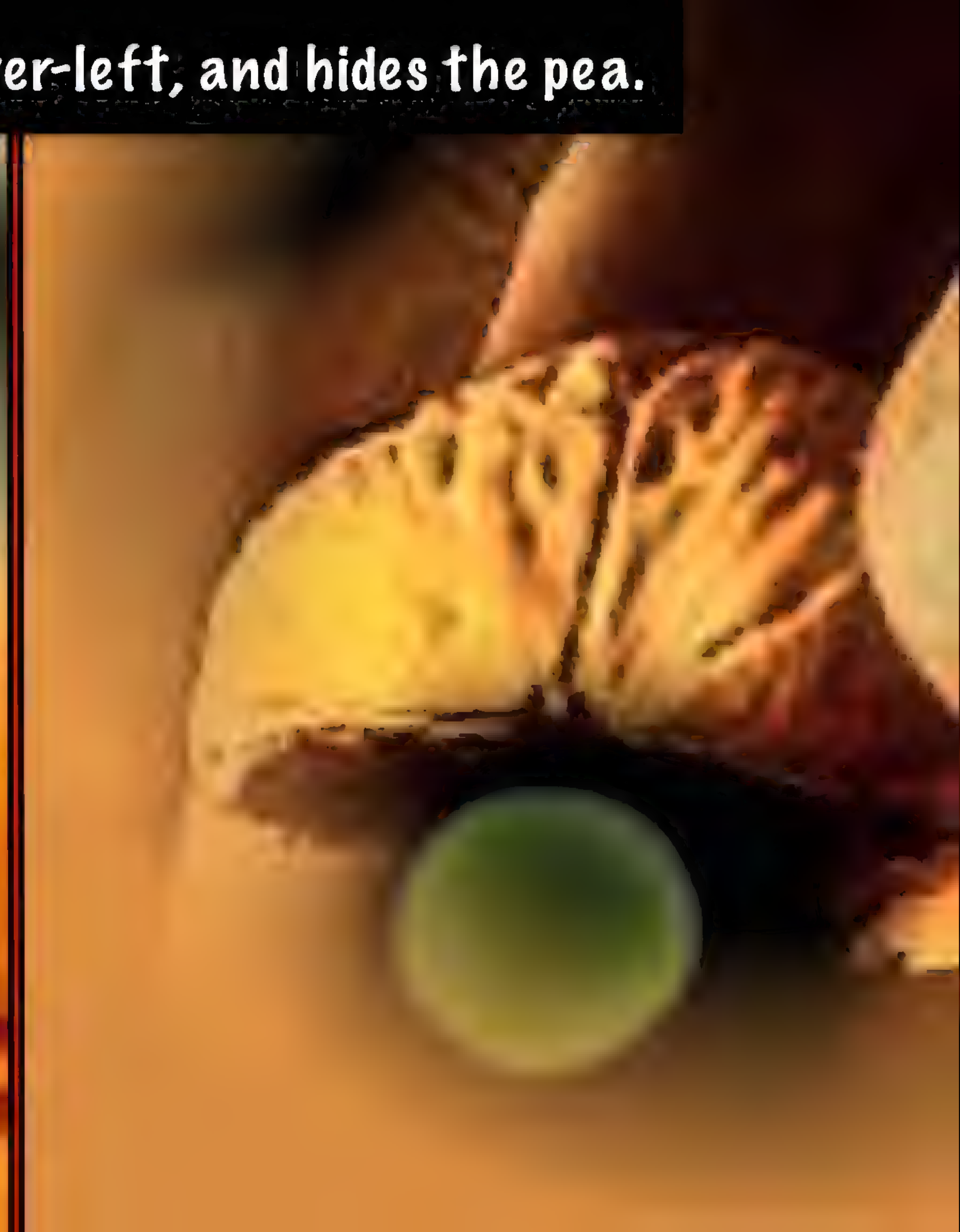


Thax spots Ferris and Iturbi at the far end of the midway.

They march purposefully
toward him in lockstep.



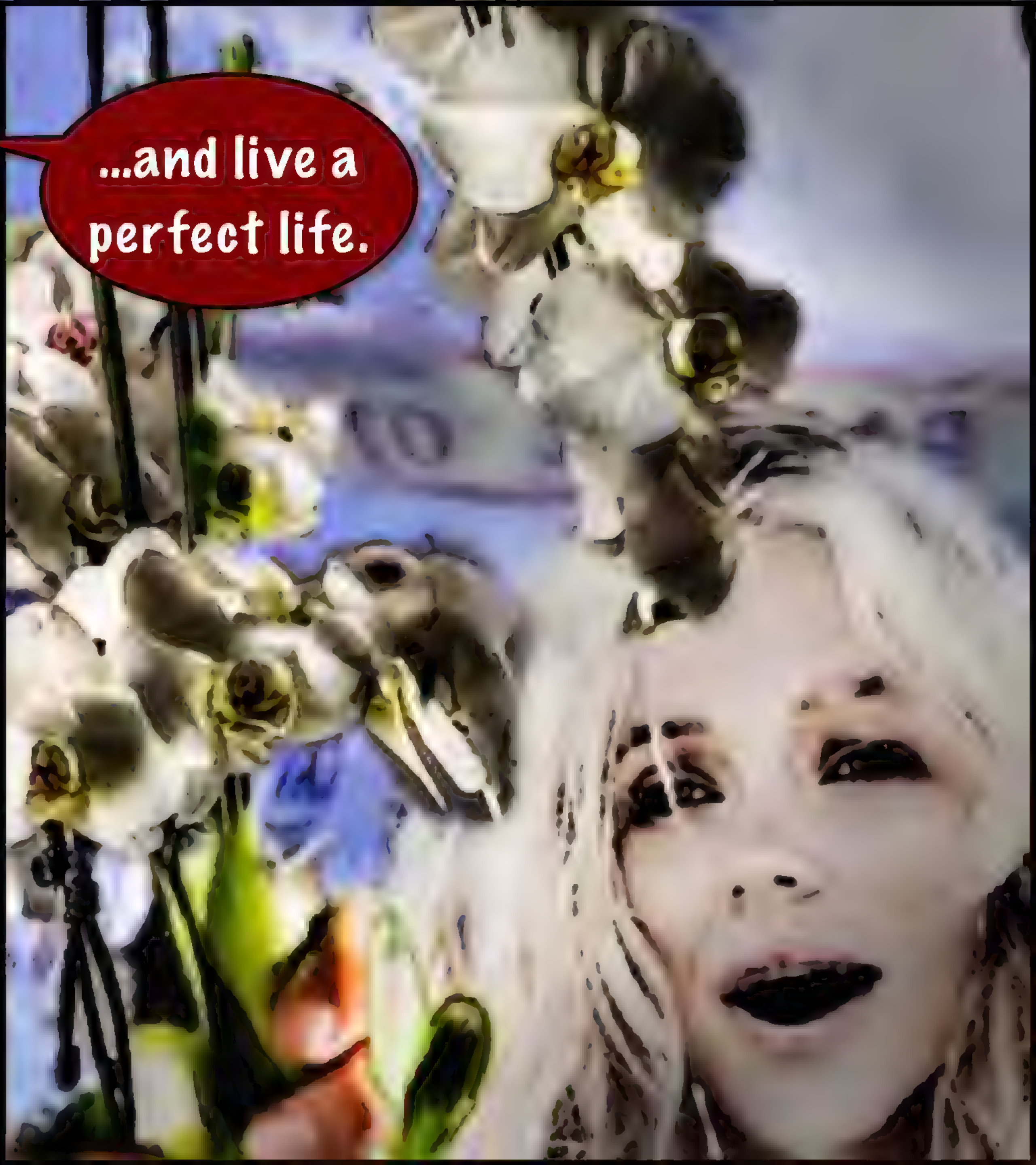
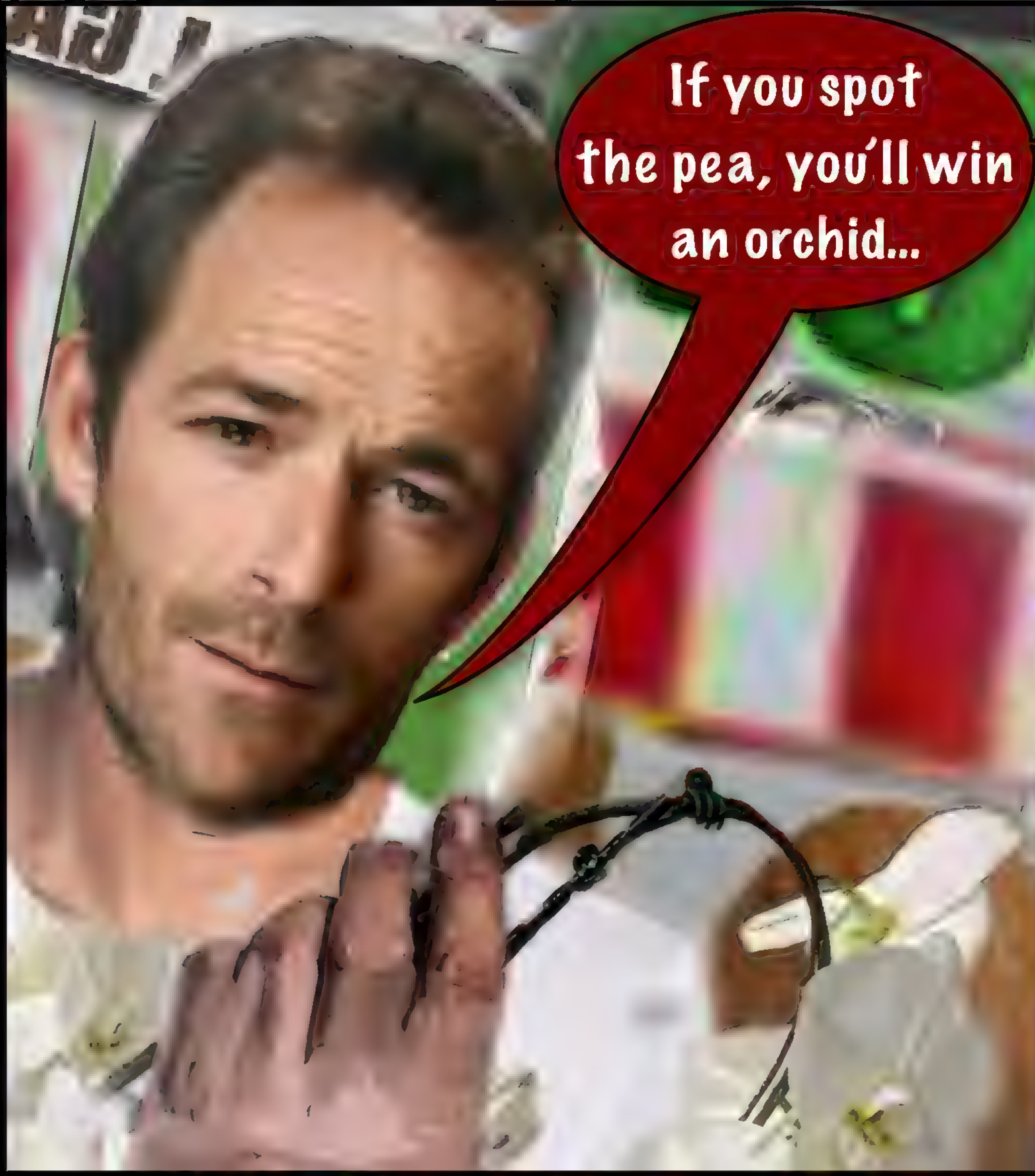
Thax makes a slow pass, right-over-left, and hides the pea.





And here they
go again, ladies and
gentlemen.

So simple, yet
so mysterious.



Miss
the pea,
well, you get a
chance to try
again.



A close-up photograph of a man with short, dark hair and a light beard, looking intently at a small, bright green object resting on a red, textured surface. His hands are visible, with fingers spread, framing the object. A red speech bubble with a black outline points towards the object.

And it's
only a dollar.



THE END

CREDITS

Written and Directed by John McNaughton

Illustrated by Tony Byrnes

Adapted from the novel by Robert Edmond Alter

Additional dialogue by Ted Mann

Book design by Dmitry Samarov

Executive Producer Steven A. Jones

Technical Administrator Robert Brandel

Printed by McNaughton & Gunn

SPECIAL THANKS

Elke Titus

Jack Byrne

Scott Yoselow

J-nett Jones

I met JM downstate at the University of Illinois in the late sixties. We were enrolled in the University's Fine Art College, and we co-created art projects including sculptures and short films. One of our first student projects together was "Happy Pig," a short underground experimental film we shot on a wind-up 16mm Bolex camera. That film disappeared after its premier showing at a house party one wild evening, 50 plus years ago. But other projects we worked on together in art-college included "destructo-mania" which originated around a self-destructing kinetic sculpture on display in the halls of the Krannert Fine Arts Building. The heroic sculpture was about 10 feet tall, made from plaster, wood, wire, and an old washing machine motor. Once plugged in, the sculpture, which resembled Rodin's "The Thinker," shook and trembled until it all fell apart, all set to flashing lights, smoke bombs and music furnished by our hard rock musician friends.

After art college, our collaboration extended to a folio of haunting black & white photographs that John shot on site, inside, of the shuttered state prison in Joliet, Illinois. We used those photos to pitch a documentary film to the local PBS station. That project did not get off the ground, and worse, I misplaced the negatives. A terrible loss that buggers me to this day. Not long after that I plotted my life away from a career in "art."

Many years later, JM approached me to help him conceptualize a graphic novel, "Carney Kill, " based on the noir thriller novel by Jonathan Edmond Alter. Thus I re-entered the art world. Here was my chance to rectify my karmic debt owed JM for the loss of his negatives. Today, I am happy to proffer this artistic endeavor to square things up with my artist collaborator friend.

With his years of experience in cinema, JM sought to tell the story through a progression of still images which I provided. The many draft compositions surrounding each scene in Carney Kill can be shown upon request.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. BYRNES". The letters are bold and somewhat irregular, with a cursive-like flow.

Tony Byrnes

CARNY



KILL

